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MORAL DISCOURSE
ON THE
ATTRIBUTES of GOD:
OR, A
SHORT REVIEW
OF THE
Christian Religion,
ON THE
PRINCIPLES of REASON.

By a LAYMAN.

Occasioned by a small Book, intitled

An ESSAY on SPIRIT.

Which was published about two Years ago, by a
certain Right Reverend Prelate, in a neigh-
bouring Kingdom.

L O N D O N:

Printed for W. OWEN, at *Homer's Head*, near Temple-
Bar. 1754.

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TO HIS GRACE
T H O M A S,

By Divine Permission,

Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury*, Primate of all *England*, &c. and, thro' him and under his Protection, to the HEADS of all others the Religions now known or practised in the Universe.

May it please Your Grace,

YOUR Grace knows too well the tottering State of the Christian Religion, and the growing Circumstances of Atheism and Infidelity in this libertine Age and Country, to require further Informations from me on those Heads; Reason is now the sovereign Judge and decides arbitrarily in all the Affairs of Controversy: Mysteries and Articles of Faith are laid aside,

MONDAY COURSE

NOTES

ATTENTION OF COURSE

3 HOURS PER WEEK

COURSE

Christianity

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fide, and nothing can pass but what stands that Touch-stone : All the Wit and Humour of the Age is employed in laughing Religion out of the World, and a grave Man is often at a Loss how to defend it : Church Authorities go for nothing : Revelation is said to be but an Imposition, and there is no Way left to support it but by the same Weapons and Engines which so long have been employed against it.

I have been thrown into this Way of thinking by a Poem of the celebrated Mr. *Voltaire's*, addressed to a Lady at *Brussels*, which fell into my Hands in that City in the Year 1739. It is wrote with great Art, Wit and Humour, and turns into Ridicule every Thing amongst Christians sacred, with all the Powers of Genius peculiar to that Writer.

I must own it shocked me, and almost staggered my Faith ; but we are generally fond of Tenets early inculcated and long adopted : And I thought it therefore fit, before I gave myself up to the pleasing Delusion, to consider the whole of Religion with Gravity and Attention, and to see if I might not, in the Reason of Things, find some Arguments to support a System handed down to me through so many Ages, and believed and confided in by myself to that Hour.

Perhaps it may be Pride, my Lord ; but if not Pride, there is something very like it in the human Mind, which makes us very adhering to Maxims long professed by us ; we are probably ashamed to have lived so long in Error, and unwilling to acknowledge our own Weakness or Ignorance
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DEDICATION.

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which laid us open to Imposition : One thing or other gives us an Aversion to new Doctrines, and makes us tenacious of the Old whether they be of Religion or of Philosophy : And you shall find even this Day a Scholar of *Cartbesius's* School Debate against all the experimental Philosophy of Sir *Isaac Newton* for an absolute Plenum in Nature, with as great Vehemence and as much Earnestness as the Professors of Christianity against an Atheist, or as one set of Christians against another.

Perhaps this Leaning of my Mind towards the Religion of my Ancestors might have been my Motive to the Inquiry, but whatever it was, I set myself seriously and with Attention to the Consideration of it, and I found that, our Faith could be defended with Reason; and that the Unbelievers drew their most weighty Arguments from our shutting it out from any Share in the Debate; I concluded therefore, in one Part or other of my Life, to give my Sentiments on that Head to the World.

But, my Life, my Lord, has been such a Series of Adventures, that I never had Leisure to set to it until the Year 1751, when, provoked by a very impious though insignificant Book, published under the Title of *An Essay on Spirit*, and ascribed to a certain Right Reverend Bishop of a neighbouring Kingdom, I determined to snatch as many Hours as I could for the Purpose; and I arranged (as well as my Hurry would permit) my Thoughts on that Head into the Order in which your Grace will find them in the following Pages.

I

I have presumed to address them in the first Place to your Grace, as the Head of that Part of the Christian Church with which I live in immediate Communion; and, through your Grace and under your Protection, to the Heads of all other Religions now known or practised on the Globe which we inhabit.

This Manner of Address, my Lord, may appear somewhat strange to your Grace; but when I consider the whole Creation as the Work of one only God, when I find him in his second Personality manifested in the Flesh, preaching and teaching the Terms of Salvation to all, and for all dying a most shameful and ignominious Death upon the Cross, I must conclude it fit and proper for me neither to confine myself to any one Set of the Christian Church, nor to any one Nation, Religion or Country. But after the Respect and Honour due from me to your Grace, as Head of the District in which I live, to address myself to the whole World, as it imports every Man equally, rightly to know God and to believe in him; that believing in the Law-giver we may submit ourselves to his Laws, on the Observation of which our Salvation in the first Resurrection depends, and I hope therefore your Grace will be so good to pardon my second Address to the Heads of the other Sectaries.

The Purpose of the divine Mission, was for the Salvation of all the Race of *Adam*; and if we believe the Scriptures, the Doctrine of Christ was preached in all the Nations then known to us in the World; the Apostles and Disciples of Christ
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laboured in the Vineyard with their own Hands, and by Miracles by them wrought in all Lands convinced their Hearers of the Truth of the Doctrine by them taught.

This Power over Nature was at least equal to reasoning upon the Principles they inculcated: They did not absolutely and dogmatically impose Articles of Faith without giving their Reasons for them; nay, they gave the strongest Reasons in the World, in the Miracles which they wrought; and could our Clergy give the like Reasons in Support of their Doctrines, the whole Earth might by this Time be all of one Religion; but as this Power is withdrawn, a Reason is every where now expected, Credenda's of all kinds dogmatically imposed are laughed at, and we must be every where ready (as *St. Paul* advises) to give a Reason for the Faith which is in us, and which we would persuade others to embrace.

God has blessed this Nation above all others: We are the Ballance of Power every where; if Liberty is any where found it owes its Preservation to *Great-Britain*, which like a Guardian-Angel watches over the Whole, and, at the Expence of its own Blood and Treasure, defends and protects it: Its Commerce is extended to all Parts of the Globe, and it asserts its Dominion over all the Seas and Oceans, which are known upon it; so that no Nation ever was (not excepting the universal Monarchy of old *Rome*) more fit to extend the true Religion than *Great-Britain*; others there are indeed who labour more assiduously to spread their particular Tenets; but as their Views
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therein are meerly Merchantile and Mercenary, and as their Doctrines are less pure and more contradictory to Reason, they can never, nor ought they to succeed.

Great-Britain is free, and consequently noble and generous ; to it belongs, not only the Care of the temporal Liberty and Property of the Whole, but the spiritual Liberty also ; and best becomes it therefore, to relieve the World from the Bondage of Mysteries, to give to the rest the Reason of the Faith which is in them, and to shew to all Nations, that their God is amiable and lovely, mild, just, and merciful to all who call upon and put their Trust in him. For the Accomplishment of which great Work it is not one of the least Blessings bestowed upon this Land that a Person of your Grace's Piety, Wisdom and Fortitude, is by Providence, at this Time, placed at the Head of the Church.

To your Grace therefore (my Lord) as Head of that Part of Christ's Church of which I have the Happiness to be a Member, I make my Address of this little Treatise, and I hope you will afford it your Protection so far as you may find it answering the Purposes by its Author intended : The Support and Propagation of the true Religion of Christ ; and I conclude,

My Lord,

Your Grace's most Obedient,

And most humble Servant,

J. B.

P R E F A C E.

*W*HEN Sextus Quintus had issued a Proclamation, offering a very considerable Reward to any Man who should safely erect a certain Obelisk at Rome, but under the Penalty of Death in Case he should fail in the Attempt ; a Person skilled in mechanic Powers was found hardy enough to undertake it ; he proceeded to the Execution, but when he had got the Obelisk almost upright he found himself stinted in Room to work farther, and, despairing of achieving, was on the Point of giving up the Undertaking, when an English Sailor, who knew nothing of the Mathematics, cried out for Water, which being brought to him, he sprinkled it on all the Ropes, and by wetting them plentifully contracted them to such a Degree, that they drew up the Obelisk to the wished for Point, and fixed it, to the great Joy of the Undertaker and of all the Standers by.

I mention this Story as a Parallel to my Undertaking : I have adventured to offer myself, in the Dispute about the Trinity, as the English Sailor did on the above Occasion ; I find the most learned Divines were not able to make Way with their Mysteries against common Sense, and I have therefore made the following little Effort to see what plain good Sense and honest Reason may do ; in which if I have failed 'tis not the Fault of my Heart ; I have intended well, and I hope the most zealous cannot take it amiss.

There was a Time when Mysteries were revered, and when Reason bowed itself down in blind Obedience, to every thing of that Sort advanced by the infallible Guide,

the Church ; but this reasoning Age of ours will not away with them longer ; there must be a Reason assigned for every Thing : The Reformation has taken off the Bandage, and as we have been made to see the gross Impositions of the one, we can no longer suffer any thing like them in the other Church.

'Tis in Nature that when we force ourselves from whatever had hold of us, we are carried by that Force to a greater Distance, than, were we let loose, we should have gone of our own accord ; when the Reformers had forced themselves from the then established Church, they should have made Reason their Guide in all ; but preserving still the old lazy Method of inforcing difficult Tenets and hard to be reconciled, by the single Name of Mysteries, and excluding arbitrarily our Reason from any Share in the Debate, the Laity, who had been taught that Reason was their Guide in the Reformation, would no longer submit to Mysteries, and forcing themselves from that Hold have fallen into the contrary Extream : An intire Disbelief of the Doctrine, and an utter Denial of the Revelation, on which it is built.

This is the State of Christianity at this Time ; the Clergy adhere strictly to the Doctrine of Mysteries, the Laity, shocked at such an Imposition, are every Day exposing the whole Doctrine of Christ on that Account.—Reason, say they, is the Guide given to Man ; it could never be the Will or the Decree of a good Being, that Man, who has no other Light to go by, should be eternally damned to Misery, for not believing what is directly contradictory to that Reason ; therefore the whole Doctrine of the divine Person who is charged with this gross and absurd Imposition, can have no Authority from the good Being who has formed us, and all that he has taught is a meer human Invention ; there is no Revelation, and we are under no Obligations but moral Honesty ; nor are there any Rewards or Punishments but those which our own good Behaviour or Imprudence brings upon us in this World ;
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and they laugh at all Religion, Church, Hierarchy and spiritual Dominion.

This sure is a melancholy Situation for the Church of Christ to be in; and it cannot therefore, in me, be thought a Crime, if I offer the following little Treatise to the World in the plain and humble Dress it wears; if any Thing it contains can induce the Chiefs of both Parties to understand one another better than they have hitherto done, it may in time produce a Coalition between them, and reconcile Mankind to the best System of Morality that ever yet appeared in the World, inclosed as it is like an Iliade in a Nut-shell. If I can be pardoned the Expression, inclosed, I say, in one single and short Sentence: "Do to no Man but as thou wouldst he should do unto you."

Is it not a melancholy Reflection to think that a System so full of Peace, mutual Forbearance, Forgiveness of Injuries: A System taught by so dignified a Personage, who sealed his Doctrine with his Blood, and with that of his Apostles and Followers, saying, by this shall ye be known to be my Disciples, in that ye love one another: A Person, who persecuted to the Death upon the Cross, prayed for his Enemies, saying, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do; is it not, I again say, a melancholy Reflection to think that such a Religion of Peace and Love should, in the Hands of its Professors, occasion more Wars and Desolations, Persecutions and Massacres amongst themselves, than any other, even the grossest, most sensual and barbarous Religion which ever was taught or practised amongst Men, in any Age or in any Part of the World? Yet this is the Truth, and whoever has read History must confess it.

If any one enquires how this came about, he will find, that it is from the Doctrine of Mysteries: In Matters of Reason all Men agree; but when any Man, or Set of Men, set up Absurdities, Contradictions to Common-Sense, and Impossibilities, for Articles of Faith, and cram them down with an Ipse Dixit, they will find many Stomachs too delicate for that hard of Digestion Fare;

and as 'tis so natural for the Heart of Man to abhor Falshood, that many are found ready to die for the Support of what they think right; whenever blind Zeal, for such Doctrines, gets Power sufficient into its Hands, 'tis as natural for Zealots to force their own Tenets upon those delicate Followers of Reason. And hence Excommunications, Persecutions, Proscriptions, Crusadoes, and all the bloody Engines of Zeal, to ruin, waste, and extirpate all who don't in every Article join in Confessions of Faith with those Enthusiasts.

There are two Points in the New Testament, which, being misunderstood, may greatly contribute to the Fury of these blind Zealots: One is, the Necessity of Faith; the other, the Unity of the Church.

To explain this Matter it will be necessary, first, to fix upon some Rule of Faith; and I shall make bold in this Place, therefore, to offer mine to the Reader.

Whatever Doctrine I find evidently contradictory to, or incompatible with, the Attributes of the divine Author of Nature, I immediately conclude not to be of God, and I reject it, by whatever Authority it is enforced; for there is no Contradiction in the divine Author of all.

But if I find the Sentence doubtful, or ambiguous, and capable of being reconciled to those his divine Attributes, I weigh it well, and believe it in that Sense which is reconcilable to Reason, let what Authority soever urge it and endeavour to cram it down our Throats in another.

For Example: When I find it in the Scriptures that, without Faith no Man shall be saved; Faith to Contradictions not being in my Power, and it being, in my Understanding, a Cruelty to damn for not doing what is not in my Power to do, and therefore inconsistent with the Goodness and Equity of God, I can't assent to it in the common Way in which that Point is explained to us and enforced by Church Authority; and I look about for an Interpretation through the whole Chain of God's Goodness, Equity and Truth; and I conclude, that the Doctrine may be understood in another Sense, and that
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quite consistent with his Truth, Equity and Goodness, and that upon these Considerations :

The Multitude cast out of Heaven, with their Leader Lucifer, for their Rebellion there, no longer fit for the meek and peaceful Society of the Upright, which remained without Stain, immerc'd in Matter, blind and bewildered, were no longer capable to know, in their new and mixed Natures, that there was any Means or Methods of Return. In this unhappy State the Mercy of God interposed in their Favour, and, for their Comfort, revealed to our first Parents, that a Redemption and a Salvation should be, and that the Seed of the Woman should crush the Serpent's Head.

An infidel World succeeded, and it was necessary for the first Begotten himself, by whom, according to the Scriptures all was made, to manifest the Infinite and the Eternal in the Flesh, and in his own Person to dwell amongst them, to promulgate with Miracles, and with an absolute Power over Nature, the Terms of Acceptation to Man, and to seal this Revelation with his own Blood.

But why was all this necessary ? The infinite Goodness, compassionating the Miseries of his Creatures and willing to reap a plentiful Crop from the first Resurrection, found it necessary to inforce the Article of Faith in him ; for without Faith in the Law-giver, who would follow the Law ? The Law restrains our most violent Passions, our strongest natural Impulses, sets Bounds to Love and to Hatred, to Malice and Revenge, and to every Wish that may break in upon the Peace or the Posterity of our Neighbours ; but who would obey such Laws, Laws so contradictory to the depraved vitiated Nature of Man's Mind, unless he believed in the Authority of the Person who promulgated those Laws ? No Man would to be sure : And the divine Goodness thought it therefore no Dishonour to him to descend from his Throne of Glory to our miserable Natures, he did not despise the Virgin's Womb, he was incarnate and dwelt amongst us, working Miracles

cles and manifesting the divine Author of all in his absolute Power over Nature ; he died in the most ignominious and public Manner in the Presence of all, and was buried ; nay he descended into Hell and rose again the third Day, and not only appeared to a few, but lived and conversed with many of his Apostles and Disciples ; and ascended into Heaven in their Presence ; and all this that there might be no doubt of his divine Authority, that People believing in him might obey his Laws and following his Rules and Terms of Acceptation, that as many as he could possibly save in the first Resurrection might be gathered into their original Happiness ; and that as few as possibly should die the second Death, and be put off to the second Resurrection : And it is then no longer a Wonder that he should so strongly insist upon the Article of Faith in him, and say, that who believeth not shall not have Life in him ; to wit, the Life of the first Resurrection ; but that he shall die the second Death and be more miserable than he was here, even in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone, until Repentance, from a thorough Belief in him and a consequent Humiliation to the Terms of Acceptation, intitles him to a second Resurrection ; which, if not particularly mentioned in the Revelations, is however strongly implied in the mention of the First ; for Revelations, Chap. i. Ver. 18. It is said, that Christ has the Keys not of Death only but of Hell ; from which therefore he can loose even the damned, and in this Manner I have reconciled to myself and to the infinite Goodness and Mercy of God, that Article which before so greatly shocked me, and which to me appeared so unbecoming of his Justice and his Mercy ; for the Truth is, that without Faith in Christ, the Giver of the Law, without a firm Belief that his Father and he are one, and that the Divinity acted in both and dwelt in them bodily, as St. Paul terms it, no one of us can reconcile himself to live in Obedience to the Laws he promulgated, and without obeying and conforming ourselves to those
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Laws we cannot be saved, but must die the second Death; not that we do not believe, but because for want of that Faith we refuse the Terms, and we continue obstinate in the Depravity of our Fall, which is therefore not a Curse for, but a Consequence of, our not believing.

So likewise of the second Article above-mentioned; to wit, that out of the Church there is no Salvation: In the literal Sense, and confining the Meaning of the Word Church to any particular or national Church; to any particular Modes of Worship, this would certainly be the greatest Cruelty; and that, for the same Reason, because our Faith is not in our Power; but determining of it in the Manner I have just now done of the Necessity of Faith, it will turn out thus: The Faith in Christ is the Church; and consonant to that, when Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ the Son of the living God; Christ replied, Upon that Rock shall I build my Church, that is, the Foundation of all Churches; the rest is Obedience to the Law by him revealed; a Compliance to the Terms of Acceptation by him declared to his People; we must put off the Garment of our Fall, and put on that of Righteousness; we must reform and be regenerate of the Holy Ghost, or we can never re-enter into the Presence of the Almighty, and into the Society of the Meek and Just of Heaven; but we shall never prevail on ourselves to submit to those Terms till we enter into the Church; that is, into the Faith that Christ is indeed the Son of the living God, and that he had Authority to preach that Doctrine; wherefore entering into the Faith in Christ, is entering into the one only Church, out of which there is no Salvation from the second Death; because, that without entering into that Faith, we shall not follow the Law; the Consequence of which must be the second Death.

Neither is this any Cruelty in God; 'tis not he, but we ourselves that form our Destiny: We fell from our original Purity; he has contrived the Means of our Return; and to put his God-like Scheme in Practice, he
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humbled himself to our fallen Estate in order to reveal to us, with more Efficacy, the Ways and the Means whereby we may return; if we submit to the Rules of Reformation we shall be restored, but unless we do so, we cannot return; nay it is a Doubt with me whether a bad and depraved Mind could find any Happiness amongst the Just and Upright; for while obstinate in its wicked Courses, it would chuse a Society more adapted to its Taste, and would yawn and grow Listless, and not know what to do with itself, in such a stupid Society of grave, orderly, regular, and sober Spirits: So that I am pushed forward to think, that it is not in the Power even of God himself to make a wicked and unreformed Spirit happy in Heaven; therefore if out of the Church, that is, disbelieving the Authority of Christ, we do not obey his Laws and reform, we must certainly be damned; that is, die the second Death, and be put off to the second Resurrection: But in this Case, we are not to blame the divine Law-giver, he has done every Thing to save us, nay he died to give Authority to his Doctrine that we may believe in him, and believing in him that we should reform; if we are hard of Faith, obstinate and willful, and will not bear, the Fault is ours, we make our own miserable Destiny; but he is blameless, and innocent of our Loss: Nay he will not yet abandon us, but watch over us even in Hell, 'till at last he brings us back, believing and mended, and reformed in the second Resurrection, to the Seats of Bliss so unhapily forfeited in our pre-existent State.

Thus therefore I reconcile to the divine Attributes, and to myself, these important Points, and all others which I meet with; and, freeing the Author of my Being from all Charges of arbitrary Cruelty or Malignity, dress him out in my Mind with the Garments of Love, Goodness and Charity.

But having mentioned so frequently the first and second Death and Resurrection, it may not be disagreeable to give my Reader in this Place, my Authorities for them.

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In the first Place, from the Nature of God and from a Contemplation of his divine Attributes, I must conclude, that none of his Creation can be left to eternal Misery, for the Reasons in the following Essay more fully expressed; and as the whole Tenor of the New Testament strongly tells us, that, at the Resurrection of the Dead, there will be a Separation of the Just from the Unjust, to wit, the Unreformed and Unrepented shall be cast into the Pit prepared for the Devil and his Angels, against that Day; I must conclude, that there is still, within the Bosom of the Almighty, a Means and a Method to bring them to Repentance, and to reform them even there to Repentance, and a State fit for Heaven; and that those Means and that Method will certainly be taken, so that the whole of this Creation shall be at last eternally happy with him in Heaven.

This is the Result of Reason, arguing from the known Attributes of God; let us now see what the Revelation says on this Head.

That we pre-existed in a State of Innocence and Happiness from which we fell, my Reader will find proved in the following little Treatise; I shall confine myself to the Revelations of St. John, for the History of our Fall, tho' we find in other Parts of Scripture several Glimpse of the same Doctrine.

In the Revelations of St. John the Evangelist, you find this Account given us, Chap. xii. Ver. 7, 8, 9.

“ And there was War in Heaven; Michael and his

“ Angels fought against the Dragon and his Angels;

“ and the Dragon and his Angels fought,

*“ And prevailed not; neither was their Place found
“ any more in Heaven.*

“ And the great Dragon was cast out, that old Ser-

“ pent which deceiveth all the World: He was cast out

“ into the Earth, and his Angels were cast out with

“ him.”

This is a full, though succinct Account of our first Fall from the Heaven of blessed Spirits ; by this we see, that the Devil and his Angels fell ; to wit, all those who mis-employing the Freedom of their Will, became unfit, from their Licentiousness, for the Society of blessed Spirits.

My Reader, in the following Tracts, will hear more of them, to which, for brevity Sake, I must refer him, and only follow their History through the same Revelations ; where we shall find, Chap. xxii. Ver. 1, 2, 3. that in the Day of general Judgment an Angel should “ Come down from Heaven, having the Key of the bottomless Pit, and a great Chain in his Hand ; ” — “ And should lay hold on the Dragon, that old Serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bind him for a thousand Years,—and cast him into the bottomless Pit, — ’till the thousand Years should be spent ; after that he must be loosed for a little Space.” — And in the two following Verses he adds, “ And I saw the Souls of them that were beheaded for the Witness of Jesus—and they reigned with Christ.” And in the 6th Verse he adds, “ Blessed is he that hath Part in the first Resurrection, on such the second Death shall have no Power.” And again, Chap. xxi. Ver. 8. “ But the Fearful, and Unbelieving, and the Abominable, and Murderers, and Whoremongers, and Sorcerers, and Idolators, and all Liars, shall have their Part in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone ; and this is the second Death.”

*This is St. John’s History of the Fall, and of its Consequence ; and he tells us plainly, that many of the Obstinate and Unrepented, shall be put off to the second Resurrection, during which Time they shall be confined to a worse State than this, and one fitter for their obstinate Tempers, of whom Christ, who as the same Author has told us, is the first and the last, “ Has the Keys,” to wit, of Hell and of Death ; by which must plainly be understood, that the same Person who redeemed us in
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this World, and is our Hope here, must also, after the general Judgment and Condemnation of the Unrepented, be to them likewise, the Hope and the Redemption; for to what other Purpose should the Key of Hell be in his Hand, but to open to them likewise the Gap of Salvation, when reformed and repented: So that in the End, there shall be no more wailing or complaining in our Streets, all shall, by the Mediation of the blessed Jesus, be reformed and be brought back again by him, to those Mansions of Bliss which we forfeited by our original Delinquency or Sin there.

I am not willing to take up too much of my Reader's Time by a long Preface to a short Work, but I find it still necessary to make a Reflection or two more to bespeak their Favour and Attention to what follows.

We must consider, that Christ, in his Mission, was willing to reform all; and he therefore confined all Menaces to the Day of general Judgment: It was, he knew full well, necessary to make that as terrible as possible, and rather to incline us to believe Hell's Torments intolerable and endless; but we should observe, that he does it in such a Manner, as while he strikes us with Fear of everlasting Damnation, by the Ambiguity of his Words he attributes not the Eternity to the Suffering of Particulars, but to the Existence of the Place of Punishment; and, in all Probability, so it may be as an eternal Terror to the World of Spirits, that they may never again relapse or rebel.

In the next Place, we must recollect, that there is a Time and a Season for all Things; the Apostles, who walked with Christ, were not at the Time of his dwelling amongst them, made capable to understand him in all Things, and so he tells them; but when the proper Time was come, the Holy Ghost descended upon them, and they were inspired, and then understood perfectly what they could not before.

So likewise the Coming of the Messiah had its appointed Time; his Revelation, the most authentic and perfect of all, was not till its appointed Time; the Knowledge of God and of his Wonders are not poured out all at once, but communicated as Occasion requires; had we known all, or seen all at once, there would be no Wonder left to strike us from Time to Time with that Admiration and Awe of the divine Author of Nature, which is necessary to awaken our sluggish Minds to worship and adore, and, consequently, to obey him; the Revelation of the second Death was not till several Years after the Revelation of the First, for it was not made till a short Time before the Death of that Apostle, beloved of Christ, who lean'd on his Bosom, and after the Terrors of the First had been preached to all Nations.

So (to descend to inferior Revelations) the Discoveries made by Astronomers of the Wonders in the material Worlds, were but gradually made; and to go no further than our present Time, the wonderful Power of Electricity lay almost hid from us, in Matter, till our own Days, in which they were revealed to awaken us with new Wonder and Amaze, to the Adoration of, and Obedience to the great Creator of all; why therefore should not we believe, that new Lights may from Time to Time be afforded to us, whereby to see him more distinctly, and to know him more perfectly, since, by knowing him more perfectly, we must necessarily more ardently love, honour, and obey him; and was ever a Time, or Season, in which such Lights were more necessary to be given us than at this Day, when the Want of a just and adequate Idea of his Goodness and his Love to us, has, on the one Hand, imposed Articles of Faith upon us as Mysteries, which in themselves, when looked at in the Attitude in which they are exhibited in the following little Treatise, are infinite Fitness and Reason; and when, on the other Hand, the Laity, disgusted at the Doctrine of Mysteries, are flown off even to the
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Extreams of Atheism, into an utter Disbelief, not only of the Revelation of God, but of God himself.

The only novel Doctrine which the Reader will find in the following Pages, is the Pre-existence of our Souls; if I may call that novel which has so long ago been adopted by the great Origen and others, supported by several Passages in the sacred Writings, and strongly enforced by the Reason of Things. It may not therefore be amiss, just to mention in this Place, the Necessity of establishing that Doctrine in the present Age.

It is highly probable, that all that passes here, is analogous of what has passed in the pre-existent State; if so, the Breach of the Command by our first Parents, recorded in the Pentateuch, may have Analogy to the Fall of Lucifer, in the pre-existent State; the turning Adam and Eve, and their Descendants out of Paradise; to the Expulsion of the fallen Angels from Heaven, and so forth: For inquisitive Minds, and Men knowing in natural Philosophy, can never be brought to believe, that our Spirits, which are not traduced from Adam, should suffer on their Entrance into the World, and before any Possibility of offending here; and therefore, unless we give into the Sentiments of Origen, and yield to the Revelation on that Head, made through the Writings of St. John the Evangelist, to wit, that we pre-existed, and were, in such our Pre-existence, delinquent, it will savour so much of Cruelty and Injustice in the Author of our Being, to punish Innocents, that it must induce the Wise and the Witty to disbelieve the Whole, and give them room to laugh at it as spurious, and not indeed a Revelation of the divine Will; whereas, allowing the Pre-existence of our Souls, and their Delinquency in that State to be the original Sin for which we are born Suffering, the Whole of the Christian System becomes rational, wise, and good, and a Work becoming of infinite Wisdom, Justice, and Mercy.

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The concealing this is probably the Reason why Christianity has made such slow Progress, and lost rather than gain'd Ground in the World ; for how is it possible to convert any sensible Nations to our Religion, when the first Thing offered to their Belief is a Contradiction to their Reason, and offered too as a Conditio sine quâ non : As a Matter, without the Belief of which there can be no Salvation promised them.

These Reflections have pushed me forward to give to the World the following little Treatise, which was wrote about two Years ago, upon the Appearance of a Book called, An Essay on Spirit ; and I conclude, in requesting of my Readers, not to despise it because of the Novelties of some Tenets in it contained, but to give it a serious Reading, always trying whatever he doubts of in it by the known Attributes of God's Goodness, Mercy, and Justice, in which I pray, that the great Author of the Universe may Guide him to a right Determination.

January 24, 1754.



A

SHORT REVIEW
OF THE
Christian Religion,
UPON THE
PRINCIPLES of REASON.

Suavis et mitis es Domine Omnibus Invocantibus te.

A Little Book, entitled *An Essay on Spirit*, has but very lately fallen into my Hands, though mentioned in the Title Page to be the Fourth Edition. It is generally ascribed to a Right Reverend Gentleman, but I can give no Credit to that Report; for, as all Men agree that he is a Man of Honour, he would not, I am sure, slander and abuse the noble Person whose Cloath he carries, and whose Bread he eats; for whatever his private Thoughts may be, he must think it an unpardonable Meanness in the very Livery, and receiving the Pay of a Prince, to treat him unworthily; and he would certainly have layed down his Commission, as is commonly done by disgusted Men of Honour, before he appeared in Arms against him; for which Reason I must absolutely acquit that Right Reverend Prelate, from being the Au-

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thor of this new Treatise *on Spirit*, and imagine it the Production of some ignorant Layman of the libertine Tribe, which has so greatly multiplied itself in this present Century amongst us.

Either there must be a God, or there is not; if there be a God, Man, though the most Perfect of the visible Creation, and endowed with the longest Reach of Understanding, can scarce be said to have, in himself, Powers to discern distinctly that such a Being is.

By a Deduction of Reason, it is possible indeed to understand from the Course of Things, that there must have been of every Species, a first and single Pair, if I may so say; for as we were begotten by our Parents, they were by theirs; and so we may go backward till wearied in the Re-search, we must fix on one Father and one Mother for all, who, like some spreading Tree, by multiplying its Branches Year by Year, at last covered the whole Face of the Earth.

But this first Pair could not make themselves: They must have had a Beginning: Who gave them that Beginning? They must have had it by the Will and Power of another Being, greater and more excellent in his Nature, who with the Power had also the Will to exert that Power, and the Wisdom to plan out and contrive the Scheme for the Execution of both; and this Being, we call God.

I say, thus far our Reason may carry us without any Aid from Revelation; but here the wearied and the weak Mind of Man must stop.

Now either there has been a Revelation of the Will of that God, or there has been none.

If there has not been a Revelation of his Will, then it is to us, as if there had been no God; for as we have not in us any Powers, otherwise than by such Deductions of Reason, to discern that there is a God, or there being a God; if he has not vouchsafed to reveal
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to us his Creatures, any Modes of Worship, or Rules or Laws to follow, then we are not, cannot be answerable to him for our Actions: There can be no Rewards, or Punishments hereafter, and we are left in the State of Nature, answerable only to such Powers as have prevailed over us in Society, and we are subject to them only.

Let us now suppose this to be the Case, and Conclude, that Religion, Divine Worship, and Existence after Death, Rewards and Punishments hereafter, are all Inventions of Men, industriously propagated, as artfully invented, the better to govern the Mass of Mankind, to be a Guard over their Privacies, to restrain the wild Wishes of the Heart, and to make them honefter in Society and better disposed to one another.—Would it not be a Pity, to take away those Stays of Government and Pollicy, and to let Mankind run down into Annarchy and Confusion?

He would be a very weak Man, who having in his own Possession a Jem (in the Opinion of the World, which alone gives Value to such Things) of inestimable Worth, should break it down and flux it in a Crucible, to see whether it really was composed of those Principles, which it was universally esteemed to be composed of; but, if that Jem were in the Possession of another, such a Person must be wicked, as well as weak, who, to gratify such a vain Curiosity, or from an Itch of shewing his Parts in Chymistry, should rob his Neighbour of it for such a Purpose.

I really think, that the Writings and Labours of these Libertines, are under the same Reason, as may appear from the following Reflections:

They must be very happy indeed in this World, who do not at some Time or other of their Lives, want the Comforts of that soothing Hope which arises in the Minds of honest Men, on a Contemplation of a

better and a happier Life hereafter ; but to the Poor, the Indigent, and the Miserable, it is the greatest Comfort, as well as Incouragement to Virtue, to Hope, and to believe that there is a future State and a Reward for Virtue.

Mankind are not all rich, all on the Summit of Fortune's Wheel ; the Goods of this World are very unequally distributed, and but a few Share in them ; the Bulk of our unhappy Species, are low in Life, miserable and distressed: What a Comfort to these, when they behold an envied great Man rolling in his Coach, shining in Gold and Jewels, attended by a little Army of Domestics in rich Liveries, all the Fruit of Oppression, and the Spoil of Orphans, to think that this World is passing away, and that another is soon to follow, where there is no Distinction of Persons, but what arises from the good Use of the Time which was allotted them here : Where there are no oppressing Landlords, no griping Usuror, where the Great and the Rich of this World have no Pre-eminence, and where the Humble and the Lowly shall be exalted to Thrones of Bliss ?

Under the Hands of an Oppressor : In the midst of Penury and Want : Under the Load of a Distemper : In the Hour when no Ray of Comfort or Assistance breaks in upon the Wretch's Mind, from the Things or the Friends of this World, what a Consolation to think there is a Refuge for the Distressed and a Reward for the patient Sufferer in another Life, to which he makes no doubt of arriving !

This gives Fortitude in Affliction, Peace in Adversity, and Comfort in the Day of Trouble : And must he not be a Robber of the basest and cruellest Sort, who would rob the Bulk of Mankind of these more than worldly Riches, these more than earthly Treasures, to display his Learning or his Parts, in sapping away the Foundation of this (sup-
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pose it no more than imaginary) Happiness from the most Miserable, and therefore the most needful of it, Part of Mankind.

But it may be objected, that the Fear of a future State is a great Cheque upon Men of Pleasure in the wild Carrier of Youth, it throws a Damp upon their Injoyments, and makes Men miserable in spite of Youth and Beauty, Riches and Power.

It may be so ; but let them be honest, let them confine their Wishes and their Riot within the Bounds where even the Laws of the Land and the Rules of Decency, long established by the Consent of Mankind, require : Let them, if I may dare repeat it after a Person of late so out of Fashion, let them do to no Man, but as they would be done by, and then they are unhurt, and have no longer Cause of Complaint.

If this they cannot reconcile themselves to, the Laws of the Land will lay their Hands upon them ; for they will not suffer the Peace of the Many to be disturbed by the Riot of the Few ; they will defend our Properties from the Highwayman, and the Shop-lifter, and our Homes from the forcible Intrusion of the Powerful and the Wicked ; and if to such evil disposed Minds as these, any additional Cheque can be brought from the Phantom Religion (to call it in their own Terms) is it not fit to call in Aids from thence, and from every other Quarter, to let Life run easy and to leave every Man to the peaceable Possession of what he himself, or his Ancestors, by their Labour and Industry, have made their own.

To do otherwise: To take this Bandage (as they call it) of Religion from the Eyes of the evil-minded, and to instruct them that every Thing is lawful which can be done with Impunity, would be to turn the Wolf into the Sheep-fold, and to make Society miserable and unhappy.

Now

Now this Jewel, which I have above mention'd, this Jem of inestimable Value, in the Hands of Believers, is Religion: This curious, weak, and wicked *Virtuoso*, the Author of the Essay before us, and the inestimable Riches which he would rob us of, by his Curiosity, is on one Hand, that Hope, that Comfort in Distress, that Consolation in the Day of Trouble, that Fortitude under Oppression, which the firm Hope of future Happiness affords to the Righteous; and, on the other Hand, it is that *golden Bridle* in the Mouth of Vice, which preserves Peace and Order in Society, and co-operates with the Laws of the Land, to defend us from the evil Doers which I have above mention'd. And what now, must he be who, prompted by a vain Ostentation to shew his Learning, would rob every Man in particular, and Society in general, of such a Treasure?

I have hitherto talked in their own Stile, as a Man of Reason and an Unbeliever.

I do not pretend to reason from the Scriptures, those are Books which have fallen into great Discredit of late Years, and to bring Authorities from them in these our latter Times, would be doing nothing; what I propose, is to follow Reason wherever it leads me, and to leave the Divines, whose Profession it is, to bring in their Authorities from thence to support what they find worthy of their Notice. If I err, I shall err on the Side of Reason, and I shall not hold myself Guilty; neither do I believe the Author of my Frame, will hold me Guilty for erring on that Side, since it is all the Light he has given me, and all that is now left me, if the Authority of the Revelations recorded in those Books is taken away.—I shall not however restrain myself from making Mention of those exploded Books, nor from drawing thence such Matters as coincide with Reason, and serve to fortify its Solutions, in the subject Matter of this Essay.

From

From what I have said it is manifest, that Religion is a great Comfort to the Good, and a great Cheque to the evil Doer, and should not therefore be entirely abolished. I shall now proceed to shew,

That there is a God, and that he is a good God :

That from his Nature, compared with ours, there must have been a Revelation of his Will to Man : And, that

That Revelation was lately made in the Person of Jesus, the second Person of the sacred Trinity, in whom that God has manifested himself to us in our own Natures.

That there is a God, all Nature speaks aloud.— There is so much Wisdom, Scheme, and Design in the Formation of the Whole, and of all even down to the minutest Particle of Matter, that it is impossible to doubt but that the Whole, and all its Parts, were the Work of an intelligent Being.

But Wisdom, Design, Intelligence, and Contrivance are no Qualities or Properties of Matter.—Therefore Matter having none of these Properties, had no Power in it, to dispose itself in the Whole, or in Part, into the beautiful Order and Contrivance in which we find it.— And that Being which so disposed it, whatever we may call it, whether Nature or *νοταρι*, is what I understand by the Word God, the first and the last, one undivided, self-existing and independent, and to whose Being there can therefore be no End.

That this God must be a good Being appears from hence, that existing before all Worlds, before all Matter, and alone, he must have had all Power.

That having all Power, he was not only infinite in his Existence, but infinite in his Power ; and that therefore whatever he be, whether a good or a bad Being, well or ill disposed, he must be infinitely so.

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But we find, in the Whole, much Order and Benevolence ; and every Man in particular, however miserable he may be, finds many Comforts, many Conveniencies in his Station. The Earth produces to the industrious a Plenty of all the Necessaries of Life. The Water, the Air, and the Fire are common to all.—The Winter's Cold is alleviated by Firing and Coverings, of which all Countries are furnished with a reasonable Plenty. From the scorching Heat of the Summer, there are Shades to retire to, and Houses to cover us withal ; even the Distressed and Oppressed have the pleasing Prospect of (if no better) eternal Rest from Labour and Pain.—Let every Man reflect more particularly, and examine in his own Mind, and he will find, however severe his Lot of Life, that there are still some Comforts left him, and that the Author of the Whole is therefore good.

For in this Account it must be considered, whether the Evils we suffer, are immediately inflicted on us by the Author of our Being, or whether they are not rather brought upon us, by our own Mistakes, our Follies, or our Vices.—If so, we ourselves, not the Author of our Beings, are chargeable ; and it would be Injustice in us, to lay them to his Account.

But if God had such Benevolence to his Creatures as to afford them Comforts in this their present Existence, he must in so much be good to his Creatures ; and if good in any Degree, he must be infinitely so, because he is himself infinite.

If therefore we suffer here, if he, the Great and the Good ordains us to suffer in this World, and to carry a Burden, which is uneasy to our Shoulders, we must not think this arises from a Malignity in his Nature, but, from a fatherly Tenderness and Correction, to humble us to our Duty, and to make us look into ourselves, that we may turn to him and do his Will,
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which alone can bring us back to those Seats of Bliss and Happiness which we have forfeited by our Disobedience and contracted Malignity in another State.— And that this must be so is as demonstrable as any Proposition in *Euclid*.

For if God was of a malignant Nature, he would be infinitely so, from the Nature of his Existence; and, as I have already shewn, that he is good to his Creatures, and that from the same Reason he must be infinitely Good, it would be a Contradiction that he should be infinitely Good and infinitely Evil, or, indeed, Evil in any Degree. Therefore whatever Evils we meet with in Life, whatever Wants and Necessities, whatever Troubles and Adversities, must all proceed from his Goodness to us, his Charity, Compassion and Benevolence, and can have no other Motive but our Good, to reform and make us better, and to dispose us more to do his Will, that thereby we should be restored to a Fitness for that State of Happiness from which we have unfortunately, and by our own contracted Malignity, fallen.

But if this be the Case, if all that we suffer here is to dispose us the more to do his Will, he would indeed be a hard and severe Task-master, to punish and afflict us for not doing his Will, when he had placed in our Natures, no Faculties to penetrate into the Depths of his divine Will; and when he had given us no Notice, nor Revelation thereof.

It therefore necessarily follows, from the Goodness of God, that he could not leave us long in such an Ignorance; for it was not fit that he should. And as God is infinite Fitness, it is reasonable to believe that he has left nothing unknown to Man which was fit for him to know, in the proper Time; and we may therefore set it down as an infallible Truth, that the great and the good God, has made known to Man his Will.

When I have looked through these material Worlds, wherein I can see nothing intuitively but with the Organs of our material Frame, I can discern nothing in it but Matter.

But I find this Matter parcelled out into two different Classes ; that is to say, animated and inanimated Matter.

We are all acquainted with the Laws and Properties of inanimate Matter, they are stated and fixed under Laws from which they have not in themselves any Power to depart.—A Body, at rest must for ever remain so, unless put in Motion by another Body, and so on till we come to a first Mover, who had Power and Will to put it into Motion ; but if you say that was Matter too, and from thence conclude that Matter is infinite as well in Extension as Duration, there could then be no Room for the first Motion, nor for the first Mover, and all would for ever remain at Rest.

But suppose there were, as there is no Power in Matter to put itself in Motion ; go back as far as you please into Infinity, and tell me what Power it was that gave Motion originally to Matter, or you do Nothing ; for still the Power of moving itself, not being in Matter, must be in some Being that had Power over Matter, and gave it that Motion ; and that must at last bring you to the Author of all, who cannot therefore be Matter.

I have spoken now of inanimate Matter : Let us, in the next Place, talk of animated Matter.—I must beg Pardon for the Use of this Word. But for fear of a Cavil, I shall explain myself, and say, organized Matter, which has in Self a Vellition to determine itself indifferently to Motion or Rest.

Let us then suppose that an ingenious Artist could have formed a Machine of such exquisite Structure as, in all Respects, to equal the human Frame in all its
Veins,

Veins, Arteries, Organs, Brain, Heart, and all other Respects ; that by throwing proper Nourishment into it, with Juices fit to ferment it, the Stomach should Digest, the Secretary-Vessels perform their Functions, the Veins receive the Blood and convey it to the Heart, the Heart oppressed by its Burden on the mere Principles of Elasticity suddenly contract itself and force it out into the Arteries, so that the whole Circulation and all the animal Functions should be performed in it as in a Man.

Let us suppose farther, that upon a sudden Concussion of the Air upon the Drum of the auditory Organ, it should start, or run, or turn about, just as it was formed and contrived to do ; nay, that upon calling it by a certain Name or Sound it should be of such delicate Structure that it should rise up off a Chair and walk up to you, and take you by the Hand, and ask you what would you have, Sir ?—Still this would be but a mere Machine, and could do nothing but what it was formed to do :—It could have no Consciousness, no Pleasure, no Pain, no Vellition : It would for ever be but a finer Piece of Clock-work, and could neither think, nor will or determine its own Motion ; for we are to consider, that this Machine, however exquisitely formed, is still Matter, of which no Particle is indued with Sensation, Consciousness, or Vellition, and which could not therefore by any Mechanism, or by any Combination of Parts inanimate, acquire them.

That the Body of Man is such a Machine is Evident, for all the animal Functions are performed without any Assistance from our Will ; the Stomach digests, the Heart beats, the Lungs respire, without our Concurrence or Design : So that we know not how it is done, and are scarce sensible of the Functions of either, unless we fix our Attention and watch, to be convinced they do.

I can conceive indeed that such a Machine might be formed by the Ingenuity of Man ; but I cannot conceive that a Machine so formed by Man could, from its Ingenuity, form such another Machine ; for still it would be but inanimate Matter, and could never be capable of scheming or designing any Thing, because Scheme and Design are not of the Properties of Matter, either in the Whole or in the Part ; and therefore no Modification of Matter, however curious and exquisite, could give to the finished Machine what it had not in the Whole, or in the Part, before.

But when I find a Machine thus formed, sensible of Pleasure and Pain, conscious, and vested with a Will by a Power within itself to determine its own Actions freely, and without any Necessity from without, contrary to the known Laws and Properties of Matter, I must conclude that something is super-added to this material Machine, distinct and of another Nature, which is intimately connected to it, and has Power given to it over this Machine in which it resides ; and this I call a Spirit, an Intelligence, or a Soul. And this Combination of Matter and Spirit is what I call animated Matter, not wishing to be understood to restrain myself to Man alone, but to extend the Meaning to all the animal World ; for the same Reason goes to all.

Now that in this Instance, the Substance super-added, the Spirit or Intelligence, the Soul as it is commonly called, has Power over this Machine which is all Matter, and remains in its own Nature under the known Laws of Matter, is manifest, and obvious to the meanest Capacity ; and if this be so known a Thing and a Truth without Contradiction, what Room is left us to doubt that the divine Mind has Power over Matter, and has disposed it into the Beauty and
Order

Order in which we see it quite through the Universe.

If then the divine Mind, or Spirit, can be allowed this Power over Matter, may we not still climb one Step higher and say, that Matter has no Existence of itself independent of the divine Mind, that it was the Good, the Infinite, the All-powerful, and the All-wise which gave it the Existence it has, and will ed it into the beautiful Order and Regularity in which we behold it; and that the Whole is but the Idea of that eternal and infinite Mind formed and disposed of its own Bounty and Benevolence for Purposes not yet to us clearly known: And that it shall endure and continue until, those divine Purposes answered, the Whole shall at last be dismissed and discharged.

That this is really the Case I think most clearly follows from the Reasonings which precede; for if Matter has not in its Whole, or in its Parts, any willing or forming Power either to give itself Motion, or to dispose itself into the beautiful Order in which it is, or to contrive the Means of Succession or Propagation, or Continuance of the several Species in the same beautiful Order and Succession for a Number of Generations, that Power must be in some other Being, which is distinct from Matter, and not only independent of Matter but powerful over it, All-wise and All-good.

But a being All-wise, All-powerful and All-good, could not undertake or will a Creation of the Magnificence, Beauty, Order, and Importance of this Universe meerly to amuse himself, and, as a Child forms a Bubble, for Pastime; for that would be a ridiculous Undertaking and unbecoming of his divine Nature.

To see Mankind rise from mean, and unseemly Principles, formed and increased in the Obscurity of the Womb, brought forth with Pain, come into the World suffering, nursed with Care, bred, educated
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and fitted by Instruction, for the Labours and Cares of Life, and arrived at the State of Manhood to have nothing to do, but to beget others like himself, and, as soon as he has discharged the same Offices of Care and Instruction to his Progeny, to see him wear out, dwindle and decay, and at last sink into the common Mass of Matter from which he was raised, without Consequence, and to no other Purpose, but to leave others as weak, as miserable, and of as little Consequence as himself, behind him, would, in the Opinion of a Man of Sense, be a Work highly unbecoming of the Wise, and the good Being of which we have been talking.

If the whole Scheme of such Beings could be contracted and raised out of a Bowl of Sand for the Amusement of Children, if the Child should rise up, be nursed, whiped, educated, and fitted for the Purposes of Life, beget his like, dwindle and decay, and sink into the common Heap again in the Compass of a Minute; if an Hundred could do the same Thing together, and play the Folly of Life before them; it might amuse them for an Hour: But in the Transactions of Life there is such a Sameness, those of one Generation would be so like those of another, that even the Spectators, the very Children for whose Sport all this was done, would in a short Time grow weary of the Amusement and run from it to the Whistle or the Top! How then can we suppose that the All-wise, the All-powerful, and the Good, could entertain the Faculties of his divine Mind for Ages with what is so ridiculous in its own Nature, that even Children would tire and grow weary of it in so short a Time.

But there is a stronger Argument than all those against the Possibility of such a vain Concept, and that arises from a Consideration of the Attributes of the divine Essence.

God

God is infinite Goodness, and infinite Justice:

Justice consists not so much in the adequate Rewards of good Actions as in not exceeding the just Measure of the Pains inflicted on Delinquents; the divine Author of the Whole may be as bountiful as to him seems meet to any of his Creatures, his Treasures are inexhaustible and his Will is free; and the *Eye of Man must not be Evil because he is Good*; for he therein does no Wrong to any others, giving to every one his just Wages, and detaining from no one his Hire to make it out.

But to punish beyond the Measure of the Iniquity, or to punish without a Cause, is Injustice in the highest Sense of the Word, and cannot be the Act of a good and a just Being.

But Man is born Suffering, the very Breath of Life which he first respires in his Entrance into the World is painful to him, the whole Process of his being washed and clad and swaddled in the Midwife's Hands is painful to him, and many Times a Pin is stuck by the hasty Midwife, or Nurse, in his Flesh, and makes him wail and lament his Departure from the quiet Nidus in which he was formed; in short, his very Passage into the World is painful to him; yet he, this new-born Infant, without yet a Name to call him by, has never offended, nay is incapable for a long Time after to receive any Law, any Precept, without the Promulgation of which, according to the great Apostle *St. Paul*, there can be no Sin; how then became he liable to Punishment and to Pain? How is it consistent with strict Justice, and with the Nature of the All-good and infinitely Just, that this yet impeccable Being should be condemned to suffering and to pain?

The Cause, by Divines assigned, is the Sin of our first Parents, expressed in the Allegory of the forbidden Fruit; but when I consider that though there
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be a Traduction of the Matter of *Adam* and *Eve's* Bodies, there can be none of the Souls, which is not Matter, but something super-added by the divine Will to the Body traducted from our first Parents, and that there can therefore be no Affinity or Relation between their Spirits and those of *Adam* and of *Eve*. I cannot suppose that the infinite Goodness could think it fit, right, or just, that the Spirit of a Person no-ways descended or traducted from the Spirit of the first Parents should so contaminate it as to make it liable to Pain and Suffering, for the Offence of the Spirits which animated the first Parents, *Adam* and *Eve*.

That the Bodies of all the Sons and Descendants of *Adam* were made liable to Decay, Infirmary, and Death, for the Offence of *Adam*, I no ways doubt; because the Bodies of Mankind have been all traducted from his Body: But that the Spirits which animate those Bodies should be destined to a Being in Suffering and Pain, which have not been traducted from those of our common Ancestors, is, to me, quite inconsistent with divine Justice and Equity.

For it is a Principle universally this Day allow'd, that all Sensation is in the Mind; the Body, or, properly speaking, the Matter which forms it, is in its own Nature incapable of Sensation, and the Members and Parts of the Body are only so many Organs which convey Intelligence to the residing Mind; so that the Pain of this new-born Infant is not in the Parts traducted, but in the Mind, which is by the Goodness of God placed and posted, or station'd in it: And as in this Being, that Spirit has not yet been capable of receiving any Law, and consequently not capable of offending against any Law, it would be an Injustice to punish it, an Injustice which the divine Essence is not capable of, unless that Spirit had in some way, in some time before its Introduction into
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that Being, deserved it. And this leads me up to take the Matter higher, and to conclude, that this Spirit existed in some former State, in which it made itself liable to suffer and to feel Pain.

Reason, and Contemplation of the Things visible to us, and of the Attributes of the Author of all, leads us thus far with a Demonstration, in my Opinion, equal to any that can be given by the Mathematicks.

That, Matter is sluggish and inert, that it has not, and never had in it any Power to form itself into the beautiful Disposition of the Universe, or to contrive or scheme out a Machine, is beyond Doubt; that this Order and Contrivance which we see, not only in the Universe, taken in the whole, but in the Construction of its minutest Parts, such as Mines and Minerals, Vegetables and Plants, Animals and Man, are the Work of an intelligent, all-wise, all-powerful, and good Being; who is the Author of Matter, and the Disposer of it in all its Parts, as well as in the Whole, is equally true and irrefragable; that this Author of all, is good, has Power over Matter, and is just, is equally demonstrable; and that in Consequence thereof he cannot punish without a Cause, nor punish beyond the exact Measure of the Offence, must therefore be true.

It is equally true, that Man, and indeed all the animal World, came into it, suffering and miserable; that this can't be derived down to them from the Offence of their first Parents is demonstrable, and that by an Argument from the Justice and Goodness of God, and that this Misery of the new-born must be for Offences in some prior State to this in which they suffer, I think I have fully demonstrated, and so far have I proceeded upon the meer Light of Reason; which leads me to consider, what that State must be in which these Delinquents have offended: But be-

fore we proceed to this, it may not be improper to observe upon some Objections made against the Accounts given us by *Moses* of this important Event, the first Formation of Man; for if he has deceived us in this, and that there were other Men before *Adam*, whom the Criticks upon this Historian call *Pre-adamites*, we are reasoning upon false Principles, and can never come at the Truth.

One of the Principal of these Objections is, that when *Cain* murdered *Abel*, he was banished into the Land of *Nod*, where he became a King of a mighty People.

Now, says the Caviler, there are no Sons of *Adam* recorded but three, *Cain*, *Abel*, and *Seth*; *Cain* murdered *Abel* and was banished to the Land of *Nod*, where he became a Prince of a great People; From whom descended this mighty People? say they; not from *Adam*; for there are recorded of his Sons but three, one was murdered, the other fled: This People must therefore have some other Original, and they must be *Pre-adamites*.

We must consider, that *Adam* was produced into Being in full Maturity, and in a Condition to propagate his Species; to him was given *Eve*, how, it matters not; and one of the Commands given them was, to increase and multiply, and to replenish the Earth.

Adam lived to the Age of 930 Years, in which Time, tho' *Eve* should never have produced more than two at a time, whoever has doubled the Nails of an Horse-shoe (a common Amusement with Beginners in Arithmetick) which are only 8 in Number, and considers the Product, may believe that in that Number of Years *Adam* and *Eve* and their Descendants must have produced a prodigious Number, who living intirely not upon Labour, but on the spontaneous Produce of the Earth, must in a Century or two become a great Burthen upon the Precincts
of

of *Adam's* Abode, and required them to swarm for new Habitations and for a Plenty whereon to subsist ; but when we consider that in all Probability, it being the Command to this new created Pair to replenish the Earth, *Eve* might have produced Six or Eight at a Birth, for even now it sometimes happens, that a Woman carries at one Time four, and often three, and two, and I have known a Lady who in eleven Months brought forth Seven, which makes it more probable, that *Eve* the Mother of all, the Intension of whose Being was to multiply and replenish the Earth, was more fertile than any of her remote Descendants ; and if we can believe that her Daughters and Grand-daughters were for that thousand Years as Prolific as their Mother or Ancestor, we must be convinced, that in such a Tract of Time when Men lived on the spontaneous Product of the Earth, the Seed of *Adam* must have overspread a great Part of this terrestrial Globe ; and if that is granted, what shall hinder us to believe that in the Land of *Nod*, a Land peopled by the first Descendants of *Adam*, *Cain* one of the Sons of *Adam*, and one lately come from his Presence, should for that very Reason be made a King and a Prince of a mighty People, all of the Loins of *Adam*, and the Descendants of the same common Ancestors ?

But, say they, if *Adam* had any more Sons than *Cain*, *Abel*, and *Seth*, how came it that this venerable Historian mentions but them only ?

Moses, intending to give the Geneology of the *Jewish* Nation, had no Business to enter deeper into the History of Mankind than was necessary for his Purpose ; *Seth* was that Son of *Adam* from which *Abraham* descended, from whom came *Isaac*, and so down he traces the Descent to *Joseph* and his Brethren, who multiplied so exceedingly in *Egypt*, in the Space

of 400 Years, that they became formidable to the Prince of that Country, and were by him forced to make their Exit out of his Dominions.

The Reason why he mentioned the three Brethren (for in Truth he had no Business to go farther than *Seth*) might be the extraordinary Event which happened in that Family at a Time when no more of *Adam's* Children remained, as Inmates in his Dwelling, but the three, that is to say, *Cain*, *Abel*, and *Seth*; for was it not indeed a very extraordinary Event, that one of these three should murder the other, and being ashamed to see the Face of those of his Brethren who knew him, that he should retire to a far distant Country where he might have imagined the Story of his Iniquity was not yet heard, where his Person was not yet known, and leave *Seth* only with the Father of Mankind to tend him in his old Age?

Another Cavil against this venerable Historian is, the Improbability of the Deluge; for since Mankind have so deeply searched into Nature, and found that the whole Atmosphere, condensed into Water, could not have raised a Flood of above three and thirty Foot perpendicular upon the Face of this Globe which we inhabit, they cannot believe that the Inhabitants of the Mountains, or high Countries, could be washed away with the Water of the Deluge; or that no more of the Race of Man escaped that Inundation than the Family of *Noah*, who embarked with him in the Ark: But whoever reads Doctor *Burnett's* Theory of the Earth, and looks on the present Face of this Globe, will find strong Reasons to believe, that the once beautiful and sperical Surface of the Earth, undermined by the Waters which it contained, fell into the great Abyss, and drove out the Waters with such Impetuosity as to wash even the highest Tops of the Ruin it left behind; which at once accounts, not only for the Universality of the Deluge, but for the In-

Inequalities or Mountains also which still remain, and gives an Air of great Probability to the Truth handed down to us by *Moses*.

But there is still a Reason, much stronger, to believe that no more of the Race of *Adam* escaped that Deluge than the Family of *Noah*, recorded in *Moses's* Account; for the forty Days Rain (we must consider) had so obscured the Heavens by the Density of the Cloud which supply'd it, that the Days and the Nights were equally dark: The Family of *Noah*, covered with this perpetual and thick Darknesh, could no longer count the Days or the Nights of its Continuance; and having no Measure of Time, were put quite out of their Reckoning; so that when the Sky clear'd up, and the Sun came visible, they knew not at what time of the Moon's Age they were, and might probably have supposed this Return of Light to have happened at the Full, or at the Quarters, of the Moon: But on the Setting of the Sun, finding no Moon in the wide Expanse of Heaven at a Time when by their Account they expected it to be in the Full, or in the Quarter, they might well suppose, in the wild Affright which they were put into at the Terrors of God's Wrath, and at the horrid Crash of a World falling about their Ears, that it had not only destroyed the Earth but deprived them of the Moon also; which (relying on the great Credit of our Historian) we must believe to be the Case: For why else that great Joy, which they made on its Re-appearance in the Heavens, and their instituting those Feasts of the *Neomeniæ*, or new Moons, to be as a perpetual Memory of their Gratitude, in this Wreck of Nature, for the Preservation of that important Luminary, which was not only their Light in the Night, but their universal Measure of Times and Seasons to that great and remarkable *Æra*,

Now

Now these Festivals were not peculiar to any Nation or Country ; they were universally kept by all Countries : And even in our modern Discoveries of Countries, for Ages unknown to the rest of the World, we have found still Traces of them, sufficient to convince us, that the present Race of Man must have proceeded, and proceeded only from the Family of *Noah*, who instituted them on that particular Occasion ; and this must give a Sanction to the History handed down to us from that great Man, who fixes the Creation to a certain Time.

Sir *Isaac Newton*, in his Chronology, endeavours to support him in this Particular ; and by a Force of Reason peculiar to himself, tracing Mankind back to its great Original, almost demonstrates that the important Act of the Creation must be fixed to, or very near, that *Æra*.

But it is time to return : Man therefore, ever since the Formation of *Adam*, being born Suffering, must have offended in another State ; and must be of an earlier Date as to his Mind, or Spirit, than that of the Creation of these material Worlds ; for he could never have been Delinquent before he existed : But Delinquent he must have been before his Existence in the human Form, or he would not come into it Suffering : And he therefore existed in some other Form, in which he committed the Offence for which he suffers here. And this leads me to the first Creation, the most perfect Work of the divine Mind, the Creation of the World of Spirits, or of pure and immaterial Substances.

And now let us lift up our Minds to the Contemplation of that infinite and eternal Goodness in the Fullness of himself, before all Worlds, 'ere any first or last had marked out Time, or made Distinction be ; in his adorable Solitude from his unbounded Benevolence willing and designing to communicate his
Hap-

Happiness, and forming the important Scheme of Creation to give Beings to a mighty Number of Creatures, susceptible of Joy and Happiness unutterable in his Presence.

In this State he could be under no Necessity, he could be actuated by no Resentment, nor impelled by any Principle but Love.

He could not be blind to Futurity, nor ignorant that of the Myriads to whom he had it in Contemplation to give Being, many, from the Freedom of Will with which to make them capable of Happiness it was fit to endow them, would fall from the Purity in which he should create them.

Why then (some one may ask) if he foresaw their Fall, why did not this good Being, this great and merciful Creator, leave those miserable Wretches out of his Scheme intirely, and let them remain in their original *non Entity*, and not call them into a transitory Heaven which they were soon to forfeit, and to be cast thence into eternal and infinite never ending Misery?

'Tis certain that God must have foreseen their Fall; but they had never offended him, and he would not therefore do them the Diskindness to leave them out of his Scheme on that Account: And he gave them Being, 'tis true; but he could never have given them Being had he foreseen their eternal Misery, or designed or intended, that to be their unhappy Lot; his Principle was Love and Benevolence, not Malice or Ill-will; and he weighed it in the infinite Wisdom of his own Mind, and concluded it to be better for them, that he should give them Existence than leave them out of his wonderfully benevolent System; for in the Treasury of his own Wisdom and Grace, he found a Means, to reform and amend them when fallen, and to bring them back again to that eternal
and

and endless Bliss to which he originally created them, and therefore he resolved to create them.

Had the Consequence of the Creation appeared to him to be so fatal to any of the Creatures which he had in Contemplation, he could not from the Goodness of his Nature create them; for as there is no Proportion between numberless Ages of Bliss when compared to an Eternity of Misery, it would not be just or equitable to give them a Being, however happy for a Time, which at any Period of that Time, however Distant, was to make them miserable in eternal Torments.

This, or something infinitely more Benevolent, must have passed in the divine Mind, before the first Creation of Spirits; and reasoning still from the Goodness of that Mind, we must conclude, that before all Creation he had formed the God-become Scheme of material Worlds, in which to receive the miserable Delinquents whenever they should fall from that Purity, in which he was to create them, and become unfit for heavenly Society.

And here in this important Meditation the divine and infinite Goodness, free to do or not to do, determined in favour of Mercy, and planed out the Creation of Spirits, the material Worlds to the Purposes aforesaid, the State of Probation in which we stand, a Promulgation of the Terms to Man on which he was to return, a Redemption by Jesus, a Resurrection, an Hell for the farther Reformation of the more obstinate Spirits, a Resurrection from the Dead, a Day of Judgment, and an Eternity of Happiness even to the Miserable and the Fallen.

All this seems to me reasonable; for as God is infinite Goodness, the whole Scheme of his Providence must be good also, benign and benevolent, and it is amazing to me how his Creatures can so mistake the bound-

bountiful Author of their Being as they have done ; Mercy, Justice, Wisdom, Power, Fore-sight, Goodness, Fitness, are his in an infinite Degree ; but there can be no Contrariety in the divine Essence, no Contradiction in him : Therefore he cannot be cruel, unjust, irascible, unforgiving, punishing without Mercy and without End ; these are the Contraries, the direct Opposits of his Attributes, and he cannot therefore be justly charged with all or any of these evil Dispositions.

But for the divine Author of all, free and under no Necessity, to call into Being an innumerable Host of Beings, foreseeing that their Eternity should be miserable, and still free to take them into his Scheme or to leave them out : Under such Conviction to give them those Beings, would be an Act not only of Injustice but of the greatest Cruelty and Wrong ; and would be an Act rather becoming an evil than a good Spirit.

'Tis Wonder and Amazement to me to reflect upon the unseemly Calumnies which some eminent Divines have loaded him with, in Support of that favourite System of theirs, an Eternity of Punishments.

In the first Place they insist, that from the Instant of the Fall of those unhappy Spirits, the Power of Repentance was absolutely taken away ; and this they do, because they were at a Loss how otherways to withhold the Mercy of God from their Relief, in case of a thorough Repentance.

In the next Place, to reconcile the divine Justice to this Inequality of Punishment ; God, say they, who is the Being offended, is infinite ; therefore the Offence against him, though of a Creature however inconsiderable in itself, must be infinite too with Respect to the Person offended ; but this is meer Sophistry ; the Offence is by the Creature who in his own

Nature as a Creature cannot be perfect ; for there is none perfect but one ; and that perfect one is good and merciful, and must rather pity the Offender because of his Infirmary, than take such an unworthy Occasion, or rather Pretence, to punish the Wretches of his own Hands eternally.

There are many of those terrible Dispositions ascribed to the divine Essence, to terrify Sinners ; but it should seem to me that, in such Ways of endeavouring to restrain Sinners, they themselves who preach them, sin much more ; and it were to be wished that our Divines would reflect a little on this Conduct, and consider what an Affront, in the first Place, they put upon infinite Goodness, and, in the second, how much room they give to the Free-thinkers to run down the whole System, on Account of the Tenets of Particulars.

The *Egyptians* were highly condemned for obliging the *Jews* to make Bricks without Straw ; but these Gentlemen, damn to Eternity the fallen Angels, for not repenting at a Time, when they teach us, that the Task-master has taken from them absolutely the Power of Repentance. What an Idea of the divine Essence must this give a Free-thinker ? What must a Man of a cool Understanding think of the all-glorious Author of all, who believes this Doctrine ? Or what can they think of God, who, having formed Creatures without any Application of their own, could upon such a Piece of Sophistry damn to Eternity the Beings of his Will for their first Offence, and, with an Implacability rather becoming a Dæmon than a God, cast them off unrelenting into eternal Misery.

Who can honestly and from his Heart say, that he can love such a cruel capricious Being, as our good and benevolent God is basely represented to be ?

Now

Now let us consider him, what he is, and what of Necessity he must be : Good and gracious for ever : Of his infinite Benevolence giving us to exist originally in the highest Perfection which Creatures are capable of, and though not perfect (for there can be but one perfect, and he cannot form another perfect, for that would be to form another God) yet as near Perfection as his Power could make them ; let us consider him, on the Delinquency of these the Creatures of his Love, not capriciously abandoning them to utter Misery, nor, angrily, to eternal Damnation ; but with fatherly Affection, though compelled by his Justice to remove them : To separate them from the meek and good Spirits that stood firm, in order to preserve the Peace of Heaven, yet careful to prepare a Repository for them in Worlds purposely formed for their Reception, and there watching over them with his Providence, and endeavouring to bring them back penitent and reformed, and gathering them together, as an Hen doth her Chickens, in under the Wings of his Mercy and his Love : Let us behold him in the Formation of Man, raising them up into a State of Probation, promulgating his Law and his Terms of Acceptation to them, visiting them from time to time to allure and encourage them, calling them by his Prophets, and at last vouchsafing to manifest himself amongst them in the Person of the Lord Jesus, who, without Sin himself, undertook our miserable Nature to be the glorious Tabernacle of the Almighty, to call us to him, to teach us the ways of Salvation, and to die an ignominious Death upon the Cross, thereon to seal the Doctrine of the Almighty with his Blood, and to open wide the Gates of Heaven to receive us back as soon as by Repentance, and a thorough Change of our Minds, he has fitted us for the happy and the peaceful Society which we forfeited by our Delinquency.

When we see him in this Light, who must not love him, who must not wish to do his Will, and desire earnestly to be with him ; and who must not adore him, and worship him with a fervent Love, that casteth out fear ?

This is the God, and such he will be found to be, on the Principles of Reason as well as Religion ; but in the other Colours which some over zealous Divines paint him in, let Men who believe him such a Being think what they will, let them lie to their own Hearts, and say, they love him, it can be but a slavish Love, and they can but worship him, as the Men of *Guinea* do the Devil, for fear of his Wrath and his Anger.

Thus far I have followed Reason, and from the Light which it has furnished me with I have endeavoured to shew, that Spirit has Power over Matter even in the animal Oeconomy ; that the Author of all is a Spirit infinite, and infinitely good, powerful, wise and just ; that we are all the Work of his divine Will ; and that from our coming into the World suffering, it follows, that we must have offended in a pre-existent State ; that we are here, through the Mercy of God, in a State of Probation, to be amended and reformed in order to fit us for our Return to those Mansions of Bliss from which we fell through our Delinquency, and for which we suffer here ; that in order thereto it was proper and fit that the Author of our Beings should manifest himself to us, in order to reveal to us the Means whereby we may reform and amend ourselves, and fit us for that Return ; endeavouring, as I proceeded, to answer some Objections which fell in my way to the divine Historian, who has given us the History of the Creation, and I have followed only the Light of Reason.

But if it was fit that God should have promulgated his Law to Man, who in his present State having no Organs given him for that Purpose, could no longer dis-

discern or comprehend pure Spirit ; we must presume, from the Ideas we have of his infinite Goodness, that he has left nothing undone which in its proper Season was fit and becoming him to do ; and we must therefore conclude, that God has made a Revelation of his Will to Man, and has, in order thereto, manifested himself to him in such a Form, or Forms, as he could therein be comprehended and understood by him.

Now let whose Will stand forth, and shew a better or more authentic Account of this Matter than the sacred Historians, and I shall follow him ; in the mean Time, taking it for a Matter granted, that a Revelation of his Will has been made for the Reasons aforesaid, let us follow the Lights which are handed down to us by them, and see whether the Accounts they give us be such as are consonant with Reason.

God had no sooner made Man than he manifested himself to him, and set the Good and the Evil before him ; *Adam*, seduced by the Woman, fell ; and conscious of his Delinquency, lamenting his heavy Misfortune, wishing to hide himself from the Author of his new Being : Him God calls and Comforts. *Genesis*, Chap. iii. Ver. 9, 14 and 15. “ The Lord God
 “ said unto the Serpent, because thou has done this,
 “ thou art cursed above all Cattle, and above every
 “ Beast of the Field : Upon thy Belly shalt
 “ thou go, and Dust shalt thou eat all the Days of
 “ thy Life. And I will put Enmity between thee and
 “ the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed :
 “ And it shall bruise thy Head.” To shew that the Body of Jesus, who was to bruise his Head, was to be from her Body, and should have no Participation of the Body of *Adam*.

“ *Genesis*, Chap. xii. V. 1, 2, 3. Now the Lord
 “ had said unto *Abraham*, get thee out of thy Country,
 “ and from thy Kindred, and from thy Father’s
 “ House,

“ House, unto a Land that I will shew thee. And
 “ I will make of thee a great Nation, and I will bless
 “ thee, and make thy Name great ; and thou shalt
 “ be a Blessing. And I will bless them that bless
 “ thee, and curse them that curseth thee : And in
 “ thee shall the Nations of the Earth be blessed.”

Genesis, Chap. 22. Ver. 18. For the Obedience of *Abraham* God promises him in the following Words:
 “ In thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be
 “ blessed : Because thou hast obeyed my Voice.”

These Promises were made to *Abraham* ; but as God was willing to shew how his Blessing, and thro’ which of *Abraham*’s Sons this Promise should be fulfilled, he pitched upon *Isaac*, saying, *Genesis, Chap. xxvi. Ver. 3, 4.* “ I will perform the Oath which I
 “ swore unto *Abraham* thy Father. And I will make
 “ thy Seed to multiply as the Stars of Heaven, and
 “ I will give unto thy Seed all these Countries : And
 “ in thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be
 “ blessed.”

But *Isaac* having several Children, God thought it was fit to shew plainly through which of them the *Messiah* should come ; wherefore, *Gen. Chap. xxviii. Ver. 14.* says he, “ Thy Seed shall be as the Dust of the
 “ Earth ; and thou shalt spread abroad to the West,
 “ and to the East, and to the North, and to the
 “ South : And in thee, and in thy Seed shall all the
 “ Families of the Earth be blessed.” And *Gen. Chap. xxxii. Ver. 27, 28.* “ He said unto him, what is thy
 “ Name ? And he said, *Jacob*. And he said, thy
 “ Name shall be called no more *Jacob*, but *Israel* :
 “ For as a Prince hast thou Power with God and with
 “ Men, and hast prevailed.” *Genesis, Chap. xlix.*
Israel on his Death did give his Blessing to all his Children, and foretold them the most considerable Things which were to happen to their Posterity ; but *Judah* was called to the Sovereignty. He said to *Judah*,
 that

that he should command all his Brothers, and that the Command should remain in his Family till he came who was to be sent, the Expectation of Nations (and the Saviour of the World.) Thus it was known, that the Promise to *Abraham* was through *Isaac*, *Jacob*, and *Judah*. *Ver.* 10. Saying, “ The Scepter “ shall not depart from *Judah*, nor a Law-giver from “ between his Feet, until *Shiloh* come, and unto him “ shall the gathering of the People be.”

The royal *Psalmist David*, who was of the Tribe of *Judah*, was not only a King but a Prophet: And to him God revealed that the Expectation of Nations should be of his Race. *Psalms lxxii. Ver.* 1. “ Give “ thy Judgment to the King, O God, and thy Righteousness unto the King’s Son. *Ver.* 8. His Dominion shall reach from Sea to Sea, and from the “ River to the Ends of the Earth. *Ver.* 10. The “ Kings of *Tarshish* and of the Islands shall offer him “ Presents: The Kings of *Shebab* and *Sebab* shall “ offer Gifts. *Ver.* 11. Yea, all Kings shall fall down “ before him: All Nations shall serve him.”

Psalms ii. Ver. 7, 8. “ The Lord hath said to me, “ thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee:— “ Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for “ thine Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the “ Earth for thy Possession.”

The Prophets declare his coming, the whole Nation of the *Jews* expected him, and the Scepter did not depart from *Judah*, nor a Law-giver from between his Feet till he came. And how come he? Even as was foretold by *Isaiah*, *Chap.* vii. *Ver.* 14. “ Behold “ a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall “ call his Name *Immanuel*.” Which we are told is, by Interpretation, “ God with us.”

The Books from which I have taken these Quotations might indeed be suspected, had they been handed down to us by Christians only; but the wise Providence

vidence who over-rules and governs all, to whom the Past and the Future are equally known, foreseeing that Doubts and Disputes would happen, that Heresies should arise, and confounding Truth with Falsehood, leave Men in Suspence about these Matters, has so ordered that the *Jews*, the professed Enemies of Christ and of the Faith in Christ, should be the Keepers of these important Records ; that no Room should be left to doubt at any Time that any Interpolation, or unfair Play about the Prophecies in them contained, had been used to favour or support anew and ill-grounded Religion. And to lay those People under a Necessity to preserve these Books whole and intire, it is so ordered, that their spiritual and temporal Laws should be so interwoven with the Prophecies therein contained, quite through the Old Testament, that they cannot suppress any Part, without an Injury to the Whole.

Nor is it unworthy our Observation, that these People themselves, without a Country or a Scepter, without an Head or a Leader, ill-treated, despised and persecuted wherever they go, still subsist Distinct from all other Nations, and a seperate People whatever Country they are found in ; as if, by a perpetual Miracle, they were by Providence on Purpose preserved to be the Keepers of the Archives and Evidences of the Truth of Christianity: The Religion of the People who persecute and oppress them wherever they are.

Then it is to be considered also, with what Pomp and Solemnity he is introduced into the World : From the Existence of the World he is promised : Down from the Fall of *Adam* to the Time of his Appearance in the Flesh, he is promised : And the Apparatus for his coming is such as has never happened in Nature but in his single Circumstance ; *Abraham* is singled out and called from amongst his idolatrous Brethren,
and

and for his Obedience is adopted of God, “ When
 “ the most High separated the Nations, he set the
 “ Bounds according to the Number of the Children
 “ of *Israel*. *Deut. Chap. xxxii. Ver. 8, 9.* And *Ja-*
 “ *cob* is the Lot of his Inheritance.” Which expref-
 ses strongly (by-the-by) that the Spirits of *Jacob* and
 of the Children of *Israel* pre-existed. *Abraham* was
 called out from amongst his idolatrous Brethren, and
 for his Obedience God adopted him and his Family ;
 of his Loins was the *Messiah* to come ; and that there
 might be no doubt about the Truth of his Promise,
 he put his Seal upon them, and by Circumcision mark-
 ed them for the Purpose, and set them by as a Peo-
 ple selected from the rest of Mankind, and absolutely
 Distinct from them, not by Circumcision only, but
 by the Rights and Ceremonies which he instituted a-
 mongst them for that Purpose : When the Sons of
Jacob, jealous of their Brother *Joseph*, threw him
 into the Pit, he was wonderfully preserved and brought
 into *Egypt*, where he was raised up before the Prince
 of that Country and became a mighty Man, that he
 should be a Relief to his Father and his Brethren, and
 be the Means of bringing them into a strange Country
 to make them still more remarkably a distinct People.

No one is ignorant how they multiplied there, and
 became at last so numerous, that the People and the
 Prince of that Country grew jealous of their Num-
 bers, and determined to prevent their Increase ; God
 for this visited the *Egyptians* with Plagues of various
 Kinds, until *Pharaoh* at length was glad to let them
 all depart his Country in Peace : The Sea is opened for
 their Passage, and the treacherous *Egyptians*, intending
 to fall upon them in their Passage, were overwhelmed in
 the same Waves which opened to let them pass ; they
 are no sooner arrived in *Arabia* than they are mustered
 and divided into Tribes, distinguished by the Names
 of *Jacob*'s Sons, and every Tribe again divided into Fa-
 milies,

milies, that there should be no doubt of what Tribe and Family the *Messiah* should come.

Passing into the Wilderness, they are there miraculously fed with Manna from Heaven; the Rock, struck by *Moses*, sends forth refreshing Waters to quench their Thirst; they are guided by a Pillar of Smoak by Day, and by a Light by Night; *Moses* is called up to the Top of Mount *Sinai* by God; the Mountain is enveloped with Clouds and shaken with Thunders: The Lightnings stream around, and the whole Host is filled with Terror and Amaze, while the Lord the God is giving the Law, in which it is said, *Thou shalt have none other Gods but me.*

But I must run through the Whole of the Old Testament, to describe the Pomp and Solemnity of this wonderful Apparatus, which was made for the Introduction of the Lord of Nature in the human Form into the World; I shall only pray my Reader to consider it quite through, even from the Fall of *Adam* to the Conception of *Mary*, and so on to St. *John's* baptizing in the River *Jordan*, and he will find it quite through full of Wonder and Magnificence, and worthy the Arrival of a God.—At last he came.

All this could not be for a Creature, no not for the Arch-angels *Michael* or *Gabriel*; it could be for nothing less than the mighty one: For the Lord of Nature, and for the Redeemer of the Lost of Heaven.—Let us now see what was said of him by his Contemporaries:

St. *John* begins his Gospel thus: “ In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

The same Apostle in his first Epistle, *Chap. v. Ver. 20.* says, “ We know that the Son of God is come— and we know him that is true: And we are in him, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God.” And before, in the same *Chap. Ver. 7.*
“ For

“ For there are three that bear Record in Heaven,
 “ the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost : And
 “ these three are one.” In his Gospel, *Chap. v. Ver.*
 19. “ The Son can do nothing of himself, but what
 “ he seeth the Father do : For whatsoever he doth,
 “ that doth the Son also.” Intimating thereby the
 Unity of the Godhead, notwithstanding the Divi-
 duity of the Persons : And afterwards to express the
 perfect Equality, in the same *Chap. Ver. 23.* “ All
 “ Men shall honour the Son, as they honour the Fa-
 “ ther.”

St. Paul, in his Epistle to the *Romans, Chap. ix. Ver. 5.* says (speaking of the *Jews*) “ Of whom, as
 “ concerning the Flesh, Christ came, who is over
 “ all, God blessed for ever. *Amen.*” And in that
 to *Titus, Chap. ii. Ver. 13.* “ The great Hope, and
 “ the great God.”

St. Paul to the *Phillipians, Chap. ii. Ver. 6.* speak-
 ing of Christ says, “ Who being in the Form of
 “ God, thought it not Robbery to be equal to
 “ God.”

In that to the *Collossians, Chap. ii. Ver. 9.* “ In him
 “ dwelleth the Fullness of the Godhead bodily.”
Chap. i. Ver. 16. Of the same Epistle, “ By him all
 “ Things were created that are in Heaven, and that
 “ are in Earth, visible and invisible, all Things were
 “ created by him, and for him.” *Chap. ii. Ver. 2.*
 distinguishing between the Divinity and the Persona-
 lities of the Father, and of the Son, he says, “ The
 “ Mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ ;”
 and *Ver. 3.* “ In Christ are hid all the Treasures of
 “ the Wisdom and Knowledge of God.”

In the Epistle to the *Hebrews, Chap. i. Ver. 6.* the
 same Apostle says, “ Let all the Angles of God a-
 “ dore him.”—In which there is no Exemption either
 of *Michael* or *Gabriel* ; if they be allowed to be the
 Angels of God, even they must adore him : In which

single Text there seems to be contained, a full Refutation of the Essay.

In the same Epistle we find many Ellogiums on the Dignity of Christ, and amongst others, *Ver. 6.* “ And let all the Angels of God worship him.” *Ver. 7, 8.* “ Of the Angels, he sayeth, who maketh his Angels Spirits, and his Ministers a flame of Fire. “ But unto the Son he sayeth, thy Throne, O God, “ is for ever and ever ; a Scepter of Righteousness is “ thy Scepter.” It is worth while to read this whole Epistle.

All the Cotemporaries of Jesus speak in this high Stile of him ; and when he speaks of himself, by whom they were all informed, he says, *St. John, Chap. x. Ver. 30.* “ I and my Father are one.” In our Days, this Expression indeed would not be accounted Polite ; but it is to be supposed that he puts himself first to refute the Heresy he foresaw, which denies him to be equal to the Father.

I would not take up too much of my Reader’s Time, by a Multiplicity of Quotations, but I cannot forbear a Remark on the 110th *Psalms* of *David, Ver. 1.* he says, “ The Lord said to my Lord, sit thou at my “ right Hand.” But in *Ver. 4.* addressing himself to Christ, “ Thou art a Priest for ever—the Lord at “ thy right Hand.” Thus both the Father is at the right Hand of the Son, and the Son at the right Hand of the Father ; but neither the Son, or the Father, at the Left of either : And this, no doubt, he did to shew that neither had the Superiority.

I shall close my Quotations with an Expression of *St. Paul*, in his first Epistle to *Timothy, Chap. iii. Ver. 16.* when talking of Christ he says, “ Without Controversy—God was manifest in the Flesh, justified “ in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the “ Gentiles, believed on in the World, received up “ into Glory.”

Now

Now for the Signification of the Word Angel, which is often met with in the Scriptures, the Misunderstanding of which led our Essay Writer into all his Errors, I refer such of my Readers as have not Leisure to go through the whole Bible, to a small Pamphlet on that Subject, lately published, in answer to the Essay Writer, by which he will plainly see that the Word Angel differs from the personal Manifestation of the Divinity in this, that the Angel is but the Form taken up for the Manifestation of the Divinity on a particular Occasion, and which, as soon as that is answered, is dismissed again; whereas the Manifestation by the Person is eternal and endures for ever.

It will be time now to consider whether this stumbling Block of Unbelievers, this Paradox as it is called, this Contradiction in Terms, the Trinity of Unity, be reconcilable to Reason; or whether it was fit that, in the Whole of God's Creation, there should be three Persons of the Divinity, and but only one God: In order to which it will be necessary to understand aright, the Meaning and Signification of the Word Person.

By a Person, I understand a Figure, or Form, which is or may be, therefore, the Object of some Sense, either of Men or Angels.

But an infinite Being is not circumscribed by any Place, nor in any Place more than another; it is in all Places, and equally in every Place: It has no Bounds nor Measure, it exceeds all Comprehension of infinite Beings, and cannot therefore be the Object of any Sense of finite Beings, whether they be Men or Angels: And therefore cannot be called a Person.

But this infinite and eternal Being, every where, in all Places, and at all Times, may so manifest himself in any Part of Space, formally and in a Figure circumscribed

scribed by Place, as to become the Object of the Sense both of Men and Angels ; and in so doing it becomes an Angel or Person.

The great God therefore, immense and infinite in his Existence, resolving to create and to communicate the Happiness which he in himself enjoyed in an infinite Degree, to a World of Spirits, but foreseeing the Fall of many of them whom, however as never having yet transgressed, he resolved to create ; having in the Depths of his own Wisdom formed the Means of recovering them when fallen, the God, I say, thus determined stood forth personally, and in that Form in which Christ called to him from the Mount, saying, “ Our Father which art in Heaven.” And in that ineffable, and to Man incomprehensibly glorious Person, called forth into Being, or begot of himself before all Worlds, the purest of all secondary Spirits, and the most dignified, as willed by himself into Being, without the Interposition of any other Person, even the Soul or Spirit which was in Time to animate the Body of the Man Jesus : The Beginning of Beginnings, as stiled in the Revelations : The first begotten of God before all Worlds : The future Hope and Redemption of the Fallen of Heaven : Even the second Person, in which he the God manifested himself to Mankind.

And when he had thus formed, or begotten him, having determined him for so great a Purpose, for fear of any Lapse in this his first and only Begotten, he dwelt bodily in him (to speak in the Phrase of *St. Paul*) and in order to attach this his first Begotten in Affection, and in Interest to his intended Creation, he in him and by him created the whole Host of Heaven : Even Myriads of Myriads of blessed Spirits, that he the first Begotten, conscious of having a Part in their Creation, should therefore be more inclined

clined and obliged, and the readier to undertake, when Time should be, the Redemption of such of them as should fall.

In the first Chapter of St. *John* the Evangelist, therefore, it is said, “ In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word : By him was made all Things that are made.” By which Words it may be understood, that the Creation was made in the Person of the Son: And if we consider the Expression, and the Design of the Writers on this Head together, we shall find that the Intention of speaking in this Stile was, to let Men know that the Son was God, as was the Father; and that though Distinct as to their Personalities, yet they were really but one and the same God, the same Divinity under distinct Persons or Manifestations. So that when *John*, talking of him as God, ascribes to him the making of the World, he is guilty of no Incongruity, no Confusion of Persons; for as the Word, or Son, was God, so was the Father God also, both Persons of the same God who created all, and as God, the Creation might be ascribed to the Divinity of either, which was still undivided, and one only God manifested in the two distinct Persons of the Father and of the Son.

In the Creed, commonly called the Apostle's Creed, it is indeed thus expressed: “ I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth.” Here it may be objected, that the Creation is ascribed to the Father, as God. In the Nicene Creed it is also said, “ I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth,” &c. So that in both these Creeds the Creation is ascribed to the Person of the Father, which would not have been done had either the Evangelist St. *John*, or the Compilers of the Creed, meant to speak of the Person and not of the Divinity; but the Words are God in both
Creeds,

Creeds, and then follows the Father ; and even this Variation between the Evangelist and the Creeds would not have been, but that St. *John* having wrote on that Subject to remove some Doubts which arose from the Writings of St. *Matthew* the Evangelist, who deduced the Pedigree of Christ by the Flesh from *David*, and thereby gave room for a Cavil, that Christ was meer Man, and only chosen and sanctified after by the Divinity, determined to set that Right, and to shew, that Christ was not only Man indeed, but God indeed, and, as God, that he was the Creator of all.

But it must be understood, that this Manifestation of the eternal and infinite Being in the Person of the Father, took nothing from his Ubiquity as God ; the Great, the Infinite was not here contracted : So that it might be totally circumscribed in that Person of the Father to whom Jesus prayed on the Mount, calling to his Father which is in Heaven ; for he, the God, was every where as well as there, and so is and will eternally be, tho' manifested and become visible at that time in the Person of the Father, and in the Son, the Creator of Heaven and of Earth, and of all that therein is : But that Person of the Father, that Manifestation, is no passing Manifestation, like the other Manifestations of the Divinity, in the Angels, of his Appearance so frequently met with in the inspired Writers : It is one, eternal, unalterable Manifestation, or Person, to remain in the Heaven of the Blest for the Beatification, the Comfort and the Happiness of the good Spirits that surround his Throne for ever.

But these Spirits thus formed, tho' produced into Being in the highest Degree of Perfection which Creatures were capable of, were still free Agents, and had a Will to determine their Actions ; which in time occasioned that some fell off from their Obedience,

dience, into such Depravities as occasioned their being cast out from Heaven.

What their Crime might have been is to us unknown; but that such an Incident there was we have the following Authority to believe, besides many others to be found in the sacred Histories: We find, in the Revelations of *St. John, Chap. xii. Ver. 7, 8, 9.* "There was War in Heaven; *St. Michael* and his Angels fought against the Dragon, and the Dragon fought and his Angels: And prevailed not, neither was their Place found any more in Heaven. And the great Dragon was cast out, that old Serpent, called the Devil and *Satan*, who deceiveth the whole World: He was cast out *into the Earth, and his Angels were cast out with him.*"

Such are the Lights of this wonderful Revolution in Heaven, afforded to us by the divine Goodness; and from these Lights the great Origin himself could see that we were of those unhappy Rebels who fell, and who were cast out, and he concluded, as I do, reasoning from the Goodness of God, and the suffering State in which we are born into this World, not only that we in some former State fell, but that the Souls of Men are those unhappy Spirits whom the Goodness of God has not forsaken, but watches over with fatherly Correction and Tendernefs, in order to bring us back, mended and reformed, to the Thrones of Bliss from which we fell, and to our former happy State in Heaven again.

But in our present State we are in utter Darkness, and the Shadow of Death: We have not in our frame Organs to discern a Spirit, nor Powers yet to know what we are: We have drank of the River *Lethe* (if I can be pardoned the Expression) in the Womb, and all our former Existence is hid from us in the most profound Darkness and Obscurity.

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But to clear up a little more particularly this important point : Let us here again Reason on the Matter, and weigh a little more accurately what was most becoming and fitting for the great Author of our Being to do by those unhappy Wretches of his own Love and Creation, when they had thus fallen.

I must own, that most of the Errors and Abuses in Christianity have been introduced into it by reasoning from ourselves to the Divinity ; from imperfect, to Perfection ; from bad and depraved, to good, merciful, and just ; and it may seem odd for me therefore to set out in the same Manner, to reason on this important Circumstance ; but there is a great Difference between reasoning from our Imperfections thereby to ascribe Imperfections to God, and reasoning from our Virtues to the Virtues or Goodness of God.

From the first we must always proceed in a wrong Direction ; for we are here from our Imperfections and evil Dispositions : He is all perfect, and has no Malignity, no Pride, no Anger, or Rage, nothing cruel or revengeful ; and whenever, reasoning from our own depraved Natures, we ascribe any of these Weaknesses to the divine Essence, if we don't affront him we at best greatly err : But when from the Goodness, the Humanity, the Benevolence, the Charity, the Justice of our weak and imperfect Natures, we reason to that of his perfect, all-wise and all-powerful Mind, we cannot err ; because he possesses those Virtues, not in the narrow Limits of human Powers, but in an infinite Degree ; and whoever forms his Mind upon these Principles, and considers the Absurdities introduced into the Religion of Christ, will find, that they have all arisen from thence ; and I shall here Reason therefore from the good Dispositions of Man's Mind to those of our God.

Let us suppose a Father having many Children, of which one was of a turbulent unruly Mind, raising
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perpetual Disputes and Broils amongst his Brethren, and filling his Father's House with Factions and Disturbance. A Father, I mean a good Father, would not surely on the first Complaint put his Son to death: Would he not endeavour to reclaim him by good Advice, admonish and chastise him first? And though he should, for the Peace of his House and of his meek and good Children, turn him out of his Doors, nay, and lock and bar his Doors against his Re-entry into it, would he not still have an Eye after him, would he not still endeavour to chastise and reform him? And would he not, when reformed, kill the fatted Calf and receive his Profligate back with Joy, and with Gladness invite his Neighbours to share in that Joy which his Return and Reformation gave him? And would he not re-place him, not in his own Apartment in the House only, but in the Place within his own Heart and Affections which he possessed before? If a good Father, this he would certainly do; and shall we think our God, our Father in the highest Sense, our Creator more cruel, unforgiving, and revengeful than one of us poor angry, malicious, cruel, and revengeful Creatures? It is impossible for any Man who indulges himself the Time to consider it, to believe it.

Man feels Injuries, he has Passions that prevail over his Reason often, and he may be led by them to be cruel, revengeful, and unforgiving; but our Father which is in Heaven, is so far above us, that he cannot be hurt by any thing we do; he cannot be provoked to Passion, Anger, or Revenge, nor actuated by any Principle towards us, or any other of his Creation, but fatherly Love, Tenderness, Pity and Compassion; and he could not surely be worse to his Children than we to ours? It is impossible therefore that he could quit or abandon his first Creation, and unforgiving, cruel and revengeful, at once, and for the

first Fault, condemn them to eternal and infinite extreme Misery and Torture.

Let any Man who knows God, and knows that he is good ; any Man who sees with what paternal Care he watches over us ; how he is always instant and present in our Minds, warning and admonishing us of Evil, counselling and exhorting us to Good ; any Man who considers what Comforts and Happiness he furnishes us with in this Valley of Trouble, Distress and Disgrace ; let any Man, I say, who knows him, and considers these things, reason upon the Matter with himself, and determine, were he in the Place of the Almighty and had given Being to those Wretches, and, that, of his meer Will and Benevolence ; let him consider himself as a Father in the highest Sense of the Word, and the best and tenderest of Fathers, a Creator ; let him consider that if any Infirmities there were in their Natures they were yet the Work of his own Hands, and that they could not be more perfect than he made them, nor answerable for more than was given them ; and when he has considered these Matters let him say, would he with all the Infirmities of human Nature about him, in an implacable Rage cast them out of his House, unforgiving, unrelenting, to eternal never ending Torments ? Or is it not more probable, that though he had been obliged, for the Peace of the Rest of his Children, to cast them out, that he should still be sorry for their Behaviour, that he should be moved at their Distresses ; that he should take Compassion of their Infirmities, and, from the Bowels of a Father, pity them, endeavour to reform them, and bring them back again to their Duty, and to Peace and Harmony with their Brethren ? But if he, a Man, full of Passion and Resentment, finds that there is in him such Sentiments of Tenderness and Compassion, how can he with Decency attribute such Cruelty, such an implacable Anger, such

a vindictive unforgiving Temper, to a Being of infinite Goodness, whose Mercy and Tenderness we even in this fallen Estate so plentifully experience quite through our Lives.

We must therefore conclude, from the Principles of Reason, that the unhappy Delinquents were not absolutely abandoned, but that the infinite Goodness has us still in the Contemplation of his Mercy and paternal Goodness, and has placed us here in a State of Probation in order to our Reformation, and to be fitted again for the blessed Society of our Brethren in Heaven, from whence we have been so long separated by our Delinquency first, and our Obstinacy after.

This then being the Case ; how fit, how just, how good is it in this merciful and indulgent Father of all, to make his Laws and his Terms of Acceptation known to us, and in the Fulness of his Time to manifest himself to us in the Flesh, in the Person of Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son before all Worlds, to preach and to teach his Will to us in his own Person, proving the Truth of his Doctrines by a manifest Power over Nature, healing the Sick, giving Sight to the Blind, commanding the Lame to walk, and the Dead to rise and to live again ; in order to shew us, that Jesus, in whom he was manifest, was the Son of God, the promised *Messiah* so long expected, God manifested in the Flesh, 1 *Timothy*, Chap. iii. Ver. 16. Who of his infinite Goodness was made Man, of the Substance of the Virgin, and dwelt amongst us to teach us the ways of Salvation, to confirm us in the pleasing Hope of a Resurrection, and to lead us back to those Thrones of Bliss from which we were unfortunately fallen, to restore us to his Presence in Heaven, and there to establish us eternally happy.

But if this was fit and consistent with the divine Mercy and Goodness, why should we any longer doubt,

doubt, that Jesus Christ is the Person; let us consider therefore, how he is described in the Scriptures.

David, from whom he was descended, as to the Flesh, speaking of God the Father, says, *Psalms* cx. *Ver.* 1. "The Lord said to my Lord, sit thou at my right Hand." Which seems to give a Superiority to the Son; but to clear this up, *Ver.* 4, 5. of the same *Psalms* we find it said, speaking of Christ, "Thou art a Priest for ever—the Lord at thy right Hand, &c." Upon which we may Remark, that the royal *Psalms* would have it understood that there was a perfect Equality between the Persons: For in the first Place, the Son which is understood by the Words, *my Lord*, is placed at the right Hand, and in the second it is said, to the Son, thou art a Priest for ever—the Lord at thy right Hand; but neither the Father nor the Son is placed at the left Hand, to shew the perfect Equality between them before the Incarnation. St. *Paul* to the *Collossians*, *Chap.* ii. *Ver.* 9. says, that "In him dwelleth all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily." That is truly and not figuratively. And St. *John*, *Chap.* v. *Ver.* 19. says, "What Things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise," which not only shews an Equality but an Unity also. And again, *Chap.* xxi. *Ver.* 17. "St. *Peter* said to Christ, Lord thou knowest all Things." Which he could not have attributed to Christ had he not believed, as St. *Paul* says in his Epistle to the *Collossians*, *Chap.* ii. *Ver.* 3. that in Christ "Dwelleth all the Treasures of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God."

In *Psalms* lxxii. *Ver.* 11. we find that "All Kings shall fall down or adore him: All Nations shall serve him." And how? Here St. *John*, *Chap.* v. *Ver.* 23. "All Men shall honour the Son, as they honour the Father."

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But in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, a People wise in their own Concept, and Unbelievers, *Chap. i. Ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.* St. *Paul* not only attributes the Divinity to Christ, but seems to assign a Reason for his coming, saying, “ God who at sundry Times, “ and in divers Manners, spoke in Time past unto “ the Father by his Prophets, hath in these last Days “ spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all Things, *by whom also he made the Worlds.* Who being the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person, and upholding all Things by the Word of his Power, “ when he had by himself purged our Sins, sat down “ on the right Hand of the Majesty on High: Being made so much better than the Angels, as he “ hath by Inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they. For unto which of his Angels said he “ at any Time, thou art my Son, this Day have I “ begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, “ when he bringeth in the first Begotten into the “ World, he saith, and let all the Angels of God “ worship him. And of the Angels, he saith, who “ maketh his Angels Spirits, and his Ministers a “ Flame of Fire. But unto the Son he saith, thy “ Throne, *O God*, is for ever and ever; a Sceptre of “ Righteousness is the Sceptre of thy Kingdom.”

We find by these Texts, that the second Person is described not only as a perfect Equal to the Father in his Person, but in a larger Sense, and indeed, as God himself.

But here is the Difficulty; he, the Christ, was perfect Man of the Substance of his Mother, and perfect God of the Substance of his Father, of a reasonable Soul and human Flesh subsisting. Thus the *Athanasian Creed*. Might not, say they, God have manifested himself in the Person of Jesus, as he does in
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Heaven in that of the Father, without any other auxiliary Spirit to actuate his Body ?

We must consider, that from the first Production of the Soul of Jesus into Being, God intimately connected himself to it for the Purposes already mentioned, and was never after to be separated from it: This Soul was afterwards incarnate in the Man Jesus, who was not only to promulgate the Terms of Acceptation to Mankind, and by his Power over Nature manifested in all the Miracles which he wrought amongst them, to shew that it was none other but God himself who demanded to be obeyed in them; but he was also to suffer and die on the Cross, for their Redemption.— But as God he could not suffer, neither as meer Matter could he be sensible of Pain; therefore it was necessary that the Body of Jesus should be quickened by a Soul, or Spirit, capable of such suffering, that the hidden Mystery in the divine Equity of God's Mind, which required an Expiation for the Sin of our fall, should be satisfied.

For as the Man Jesus was to die for our Sins, to be our Peace-offering, and the Door of our Return to Heaven, it was necessary he should be a Man indeed of a reasonable Soul and human Flesh subsisting: For he could suffer and die, as Man, but, as God, he could not; therefore, for the great Work which he had in Hand, he must be God and Man.

But the Peace-offering, the Sacrifice for Sin, must be pure and unspotted himself, he must have neither Sin nor Stain; for otherwise, though his Sufferings might indeed take away his own Sin, they could not take away ours, because he would in that Case be a Sinner himself and liable to Pain on his own Account, and could not therefore be of Weight, or Worth, sufficient to purge away ours: From which we must conclude, that the Soul which animated the Body of Jesus, was a pure Spirit, who had never offended or
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fined, but who freely and voluntarily undertook the glorious Office of the Redemption, by submitting himself to the Miseries of human Nature, and to the Death upon the Cross, for our Sakes ; and whom Man therefore can never sufficiently love, for his Goodness to us.

That he was such a pure Being appears to be the primitive Opinion from the Doctrine of his being conceived by a Virgin, without the Participation of Man, by the Inspiration of the Spirit of God, and brought forth without original Sin.

Now it is reasonable to believe that as God was in perfect Liberty to create these Spirits which were to fall, or not to create them, and as he resolved, tho' fore-assured that they would fall, to create them, we must suppose he in his own infinite Goodness, before all Worlds, contrived this most gracious and God-becoming Scheme of a Redemption by a Mediator ; and at the same Time conceived in his all-glorious Mind the Spirit which was to animate the Man Jesus, the first begotten of God before all Worlds, who, for us and for all Men, came down from Heaven and was incarnate ; and to whom before all Worlds, God speaks, saying, thou art my Son, *this Day* have I begotten thee : The Son of his Love and of his Mercy, who was to undertake the Redemption of the Fallen, and, pure himself, to take our miserable Natures and all our Transgressions upon him ; to die for our Sins, and to lead us back to eternal Felicity. And this Spirit, not made but begotten of God, of an higher Nature than Angels, to whom all Angels were to bow down and to honour him as the fore-ordained of God for the Redemption of the Lost ; this pure and dignified Spirit was the Soul of Jesus, to whom the God joined himself in intimate Connection, manifesting himself in him with Power, and forming the second Person of the holy and undivided Trinity. Thus

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therefore may we rationally account for the first and second Person of the sacred Trinity, without any Contradiction of Terms, or any Mystery to reconcile ourselves to such a Belief contrary to Reason. Here there is no Confusion of Persons, for the Person or Manifestation of God, as the Father, was, and is, and ever will be distinct from the Person of the Son; and so was the Person of the Son on Earth, in the Man Jesus, distinct from the Person of the Father, and was born and bred, and prayed to the Father, or first Person of the Trinity, which was in Heaven, and which was really and indeed, as to Personality, quite distinct from the Son, though only one and the same God in two distinct Personalities, or Manifestations of himself.

All this I think plainly demonstrable to a clear Understanding which knows God, and sees or considers his divine Attributes; his Goodness, his Mercy, his Benevolence, his Power, his Fore-knowledge, his Independency, his Freedom of Action, his Justice, and the Fitness and Rectitude of his Mind, all which he possesses not partially as Man, but in a superlative and infinite Degree, incapable of Anger, Revenge, Cruelty, Injustice, Implacability, or any other Passion, which, in Man, overthrows the Rectitude of his Understanding, and corrupts and misleads his Will; all which, I hope, I have already sufficiently set forth.

So we find that God, from his Benevolence, having in Contemplation to create a World of Spirits in the highest Degree of Perfection that Creatures were capable of, but, fore-seeing the Fall of many, has, previous to Creation, in his own Mind conceived or begot a Scheme of Redemption by a material World, into which, upon their Fall, they should be received, and there kept in utter Darkness till called up into the State of Man, or human Nature, their Eyes should be opened, to distinguish Good from Evil, to hear,

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receive, and understand the Laws of their Creator and his Revelation ; to lift up their Minds to a Contemplation of his divine Essence and Goodness, to see him in all his wondrous Works, to admire and adore him, as the only one, the Creator of Heaven and Earth and of all Things visible and invisible.

In this divine Consultation with his Goodness, his Rectitude, his Charity, Benevolence and Justice, he resolved upon and conceived the Scheme of the three Personalities, or Manifestations ; that is to say, of himself, in the Father which is in Heaven ; in the Son, which was to be manifested to Man in the Flesh ; and in the Holy Ghost the Comforter, which is the resulting Harmony of the two other Manifestations, the divine Spirit or Goodness, which is perpetually employed in the Minds of all Men from *Adam*, and will be even so to the last of his Race ; and all this we find to be fit and becoming of his divine Attributes, and reconcilable to human Reason. So there is one Father, not three Fathers ; one Son, not three Sons ; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts ; so the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God ; the Father is eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Ghost eternal ; yet there be not three Gods, but one God, manifested in the Persons of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; three Persons, but only one God, glorious for ever ; to whom three Persons, but only one God, be all Honour and Glory, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, for ever.

I think we have a Reason, and a great Authority to convince that Reason, from the Writings of the inspired Writers, to believe this Doctrine ; the whole, from the known Attributes of God, seems to have been a necessary Result of his having created ; and we cannot, without affronting his divine Majesty, doubt that in his Mercy and Goodness, before Creation, he

had determined within himself a Means of Redemption for the Fallen of his Creation, a Means to reform and amend them, to bring them back to their original Purity, and to lead them triumphant to those Seats of Bliss from which, having by their Delinquency rendered themselves unfit for Heaven, they were, for the Peace of the Good that remained, cast out; and what more glorious Scheme could be formed, or more becoming of his Goodness, than that of his second Manifestation in the Person of the Son, the Lord Jesus, the promised *Messiah*, the Expectation of Nations, and the Redemption of the Fallen and Lost of Heaven?

This seems to be a reasonable Conclusion, and one, without Revelation, might well hope it from his Goodness, and from a Reflection on the Attributes of his divine Essence, and the suffering State in which Mankind comes into the World; and when we consider, that it was not only reasonable but foretold by all the Prophets, and promised to the first created of Men, that a Redemption should be, and that by a Man born of a Virgin; when we see all these Prophecies kept and preserved, by the Enemies of Christianity, out of the Reach of Suspicion; and find all these Prophecies fulfilled and accomplished in the Person of Jesus Christ, what room is there for Doubt, or for Cavil?

I must own, that the Method of throwing Matters of Religion into Mysteries, and taking them from the Reasonings of Men, was always, in my Opinion, not only an Injury to Religion but an Affront to the divine Author of Nature, who is infinite Reason; and I have therefore made it my Rule, to examine and enquire into the Reason of Things revealed through the inspired Writers to Man, and if I found them Consonant with, or reconcilable to Reason, I have always yielded to their Authority; and I must say,
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that nothing has ever seemed to me more highly Reasonable, than the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity in the Unity of one only God, as herein before is laid down. And I heartily wish, that Men, and those particularly who are in the Mission, would a little extend their Minds into the Reason of Things, and, purging the Character of the Almighty, All-wise, All-just, and All-good God from the Aspersions which have been thrown upon it by the Zeal of inflamed Enthusiasts of all Ages, represent him; as he truly is, Benevolent, Compassionate, and Good in an infinite Degree.

This would warm the Hearts of Men with a divine Love, and would, in my most humble Opinion, raise in them a Passion stronger than Fear, and make them love the divine Author of their Nature, who has not abandoned them in their Fall, but watched over them with fatherly Tendernefs through all their Misfortunes, and will never forsake nor forget them, till he has brought them back triumphant to those Seats of Bliss from which they unfortunately fell in their first Existence; which leads me now to the much disputed, and doubted, Doctrine of the Resurrection.

Upon this rational Survey of the Christian Religion, nothing appears more reasonable than the Doctrine of the Resurrection, nor any Thing more comfortable to Man, especially to good Men.

After Christ suffered upon the Cross and died, he descended into Hell.

On the Cross he comforted the believing Thief, his Fellow-sufferer, saying, This Day thou shalt be with me in Paradise. Our Creeds say, he descended into Hell: Suppose it the Place of departed Spirits; yet Christ called it Paradise: Which signifies, a Place where God is present or visible: Therefore, during his Presence amongst them, he was visible to them as God or second Person of the sacred Trinity; and thither

ther no doubt he went to Comfort them with his Vision, and with the joyful Tiding of his Suffering for them in the Flesh, and of his having opened the Gate of their Return to Heaven.

Some may ask, did the Godhead die? No, to be sure: But may they say, where then was the Godhead? The Body lay to the third Day in the Grave, Christ descended to Hell: In which then was the Godhead? In both; God is every where, and tho' manifested in Christ, was however infinite as God; for the Persons of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, were only Manifestations of himself in a wonderful Manner, and for the Good of his Creatures in those three Personalities, but he was still infinite, invisible, eternal, and one. The Soul of Jesus, in Death, parted from the Body; for the Man Jesus died in the common Way of Man, that is, the Soul parted from the Body; but the Soul and the Body were both in God, and God in them, the Son of Man was not to see Corruption, therefore God remained to preserve it from Corruption, and when the charitable Mission to the departed in Hades was performed, it returned again; the Body was not carried to the Seat of the departed Spirits; for in its natural State it could not be discerned by them, and had no Business there; but on its Return, the Body of Jesus was spiritualized, or purged from gross Matter, and it rose, as we shall rise, cleansed from the Infirmities of the Flesh, and, as the Apostle says, a spiritual Body with new Powers, such as Penetrability, Visibility or Invisibilty, Agility, and with all other the Powers which our Bodies shall have at the general Resurrection; so that Jesus actually died; his Soul descended into Hell; it united with the Body, and rose the third Day, undivided, unseparated from the Godhead, in Whole or in Part, and was still the Christ: And he ascended
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into Heaven, and fate at the right Hand of the Father, from whence he shall come to judge the Quick and the Dead.

Jesus, in his Resurrection, has given a full Evidence, an extraordinary Proof, of the Possibility of a general Resurrection : It remains to shew the Fitness of it.

On the Defection of the unhappy Angels in Heaven, they were cast out ; and though brought back and saved, through the unbounded Goodness of God, the Author of their Being ; it would not be very Decent to see those, who had transgressed and fallen away from their original Purity, return again without some Badge or Mark of their Delinquency ; for this would be taking away all Distinction between those who stood, and those who fell ; and the History of their Fall might be forgot, and others might Transgress, forgetting the Miseries which the Fall of the first had brought upon them : Wherefore nothing was more fit and becoming the Goodness and Wisdom of God, than that they should return in the Garb of their Corruption, though freed from all Corruption, though restored to their primitive Happiness and Purity, that they should still wear the Cloathing of their Fall to be an eternal Memento, not of their Fall alone, but of the long Chain of Misery which it brought upon them, and of the high Price of their Redemption ; to be an eternal Warning to others never to offend hereafter.

This seems to be infinite Fitness ; we have the Example before us in the Resurrection of Jesus, and have not therefore the least room to doubt of the Doctrine which, upon this View, seems so highly reasonable and so becoming of the divine Goodness, Wisdom, and Equity of God, that we must suppose even from those his Attributes he could not leave it out of his wonderful Scheme.

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That the Soul of Jesus was begot before all Worlds, we need not doubt, since, on the important Deliberation within the divine Essence, upon the Creation which he then had in Hand, he must have determined upon a Mediator for the Redemption of the Fallen; and determining upon a Mediator, a Redeemer, that high Office being of the greatest Importance, 'tis no wonder that he gave that glorious Spirit the first Existence. That in order to lay the stronger Obligation upon him, to undertake the Redemption of such as he fore-saw should fall, he, in and by this first begotten, created the whole World of Spirits. *St. John the Evangelist, Chap. i. Ver. 3.* that he made him therefore Lord of Angels and Arch-angels, and of the whole Host of Heaven; that he ordained, that all the Angels of God should bow down to him and worship him, the first begotten of God, to whom he spoke, saying, this Day have I begotten thee; and to whom, when begotten, he united himself by an intimate Connection, and in him, the Son of his Mercy, manifested himself the second Person of the Trinity in Heaven, making him Lord of all the World, and the Word or Promise of his Mercy to the Unhappy and the Fallen of Heaven, who, in the Fullness of Time, and for the appointed Work, was conceived of the Holy Ghost in the Virgin *Mary*, and was made Man, who, for us and for our Sins, came down from Heaven, who suffered under *Pontius Pilate*, was crucified for us, died and was buried, descended into Hell, and rose again the third Day; who ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right Hand of God, the Father, where he is Mediator between God and Man, as partaking of both their Natures; who shall come again to judge the Quick and the Dead, glorious and blessed for ever.

That the Man Jesus, whose Soul this good Spirit was, the first begotten of God, suffered and died, is
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an Article of our Faith ; we have it in all our Creeds, and it is recorded authentically in the Scripture : Therefore he, this first begotten Spirit, was neither God nor of the Substance of God ; that he was begotten of God, and on a certain Time, is also an Article of our Faith, for he says, Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee ; which signifies, bringing forth into Being ; and of this even *Trismegistus* seems to have had some hint from the Traditions of *Noah*, for he says, “ The one begot the one :” Before all Worlds he begot him : Now therefore this holy Spirit was in the Bosom of the Divinity, resolved on within himself, as we all are in God, in God we live, we move, and have our Being ; but he was not yet produced into Being, only resolved on within himself, he was in the Contemplation of the divine Essence, and was produced into Being on that Day in which he says, this Day have I begotten thee : But he, this Soul or Spirit, could not be God, nor of the Substance of God, because he suffered, which God could not ; he was of a Nature higher than Angels, for which Reason the Word, Begotten, was applied to the Production of his Spirit in a more peculiar Manner, than to any other the Children of God, for we are all his Children, and he is Father of all ; though we are said to be created, he to be begotten for the Excellence of his Person, and for the Dignity of his Office ; he was a Being produced by God himself, and to him the Godhead, in an ineffable Manner, united himself, and in him was manifest ; nay, I should incline to join with the Essay Writer, that this was *Michal*, or the Angel *Gabriel*, had it not been expressly said, that all the Angels of God should bow down to him ; wherefore the Angels *Gabriel* and *Michael* must bow down to him ; but it would be Nonsense to say, that an Angel should bow down to himself ; therefore he, the first Begotten, could not be either of those great Per-

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sonages, as it is supposed by the Essay Writer. By Manhood is understood the Soul and Body united, but he was inferior to God as to his Manhood ; therefore this excellent Spirit, the Soul of the Man Jesus, considered as the first Begotten and a Part from the Divinity which was united to it, could neither be God, nor of the Substance of God, and therefore inferior to God, though superior to all Angels.

Thus far Reason supports us in the Belief of the Christian System, on the Principles of a pre-existent State ; and I think it will be no small Proof of our having pre-existed, that he, the first Begotten of God, pre-existed ; for from the whole Account it seems as if he was to have gone through all the Stages which we were to go through, he pre-existed in Heaven, he humbled himself to the Flesh, and was made Man ; this was ordained from the Beginning : The Promise to *Adam* was, that of the Woman should come one who should bruise the Serpent's Head ; and for that Purpose *Eve* was probably so formed that of her should proceed, in the appointed Time of God, a Woman who, without the help of a Man, should conceive a Child, and bring him forth by the meer Operations of the holy Spirit upon her ; I say, *Eve* was so formed, that from her should proceed one of her Sex so formed as to conceive and bring forth thus wonderfully a Man Child, distinguished from all others, and produced in a Manner different from the Production of all others, to be the Tabernacle of the first Begotten, who was so highly produced and distinguished of God from all others, the blessed Spirits of his Production ; that in this Man, thus composed, the Godhead should be intimately connected, or joined, to his Humanity ; that this Man, that the Soul and Body of this Man should suffer on the Cross, die as Man, be raised again from the Dead and ascend into Heaven : That all this, I say, should be done to shew

shew us that we likewise pre-existed, were incarnate, shall die and be buried, and shall rise again, to be judged either to eternal Happiness, or to further Misery. And this leads me to the general Judgment, another Article of the Christian Faith. There is nothing, on this Review of the Christian Religion, which seems more fit and becoming of the divine Wisdom and Justice, than that a general Judgment, after the Probation of the whole Host which fell was past, should ensue ; for as Hell is prepared, and reserved to the last Day for the Devil and his Angels, so is Heaven for the Meek and the Good ; and it was highly fitting so to order, that the Firm and the Fallen should all be called together to that important Judgment, which is to be passed in that great Day, that all may be Witnesses of the Justice and Equity of God, in that important Decision.

And at this great Meeting, not the late Inhabitants of this poor Speck of Matter, this little Planet which we inhabit, alone, but the whole of God's Creation ; the Inhabitants not of the six Planets in our solar System, but of all other the Planets to the extent of God's Creation of material Worlds, shall be present ; for it was not for us alone that the first Begotten died, but for all the Fallen of Heaven ; and this must appear from hence.

Whatever was fit in any Place or Time, or Circumstance, for the Almighty God to do, he being infinite Fitness, immutable, and the same over all, must be fit in all like Places, Times, and Circumstances ; but all the Planets of God's Creation are now known to be of a like Nature with this which we inhabit, therefore they are inhabited by the same kind of Inhabitants, the Fallen of Heaven plunged into Matter, to wait, equally with us, that great Event the coming of a Redeemer, a Salvation through him, a Resurrection and a general Judgment, and they shall

all meet together to hear the tremendous Sentence of that one, who was incarnate for us, and who arose from the Dead to be the Mediator for all.

I have, in the former Part of this little Essay, said, that an Eternity of Punishment was not consistent with the Justice and Benevolence of the divine Author of all; but let not the Sinner therefore proceed in his wicked Courses on a vain Presumption, that his Sufferings shall at last have an End.

An Hell there is to receive him, from which he shall never depart until he has paid the last Farthing; when he leaves this Life he shall be seized by the Goaler, and cast into Hell-fire, into Torments which exceed all the Comprehensions of human Understanding.

There shall he remain in Torments infinitely great, and to the Comprehension of Man infinitely long; but in the Depth of the Wisdom of God, not infinitely long. To an indefinite Time there he must remain in Torments infinitely great, without Ease or Relaxation, until his stubborn Mind reformed, he humbles himself, is sensible of his Crimes, repents, reforms his every vicious bent of Mind, and calls and cries for Mercy; but whenever this happens, the same Mediator, ever gracious and good, shall plead his Cause, and even he shall see Salvation.

If the Gout, the Stone or the Gravel, has made many Men lay violent Hands upon themselves; if a Disappointment in Affairs, or Loss of Fortune, or a trifling Affront has made Men weary of their Being, and forced them to put an End to their Life; what must they think of burning for a Thousand, or ten Thousand, or a hundred Thousand, or a Million of Thousands of Years, in Lakes of boiling Sulphur, or of worse, infinitely worse, and greater Sufferings?

Is there any Man who had foreseen that he were to be miserable to the End of his Life, I'll suppose in a Cho-

Cholic, or in the Gout without Intermission or Relaxation of Pains, who would not cry out, kill me, kill me, I would rather die than suffer it? But can dying avail when from this Pain, this trifle of transitory Suffering, he is to be forthwith tied by the merciless Minister of God's Judgment, and thrown into Pains infinitely greater, and without Intermission or Relaxation?

The Life of Man is but threescore Years and ten, or if we proceed farther 'tis Labour and Pain; if then for the transitory Pleasures of a Day, or a Year, a Man was sure to have the Gout, the Gravel, and the Cholic, for all the rest of that short Period; I say, if he were sure to suffer these wrecking Pains for the rest of his Life, would he dare to accept of the Hour, the Day, or the Year of Pleasure? He certainly would not.

But the Existence after this Life is as sure, and infinitely more sure, than Life itself. Life is the most precarious of all the Possessions of Men, and the most uncertain: In the midst of a Banquet, in the Arms of a Mistress, it is demanded of us; and we are cast headlong into this miserable Mansion of the wicked, there to suffer the extreamest of Tortures, for thousands of Years, Years every bit as long as those here.

'Tis a great Misfortune, but a common one, that Men confine the Ideas of their Existence to this Life only; whereas it is but a Stage, these Bodies are but the Garments of a Birth-day in the whole of Life; we have put them on upon that Occasion, and we must leave them off again on the other: But we are to exist for ever, and the Day of Death is the Question; for as the Tree falls, so it lies; if we live well we shall die well, and rest in Peace and Happiness; if we live ill we shall more than probably die ill, and our bed must be Lakes of Brimstone and Fire, for wretched is the Lot of the wicked.

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But it may be said, what does it signify, it will end at last, and we shall be happy after all ; no never : Until you reform and turn from your Iniquity ; never : And if you be so obstinate here, what will you be hereafter ; how much wiser to be honest here, to enjoy the Sweets of Peace in a good Conscience, and, when the Burden of Life is laid down, to mount to Seats of Bliss eternal, and to us incomprehensible.

Eternity then is the Thing which frightens, what is Eternity ? an endless Duration ; so that after a thousand Years 'tis as if it were but just begun : This is all the Idea you can have of Eternity ; for Finite cannot comprehend Infinity. Suppose therefore that after a thousand Years of Pain you had still the same Time to suffer, or suppose that you had still a Thousand more, and after that Ten Thousand more, and after that One Hundred Thousand more, and after that a Million of Millions of Thousands of Years to suffer, pray, what would the Reversion be worth you of such a Duration the first Day of your entring into Pain ? Why not one Farthing.

Let us consider, here in this Life, where Things are so highly rated, that we risque our Suffering during such a Period for the Possessions of it, an Estate is sold for twenty-five Years Purchase, and that the whole Duration of Time is valued at no more than twenty-five Years, for the Estate is sold for ever from you and your Posterity, your dear Posterity which is so much dearer to you than your self, that you run the Risque of eternal Damnation for their Sakes : Even now when you think Damnation eternal, you run the Risque of it for their Sakes ; and when here in this Life which is present, the whole Value of the World's Duration is but twenty-five Years, the Reversion after twenty-five Years can be but a trifling Value ; what then can the reversionary Happiness of an Eternity be to a Wretch who hears the Judgment passed upon him, that he is
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to be infinitely miserable for a Million of Millions of Thousands of Years; not worth one Year's Purchase of the Pains he suffers. And how weak therefore the vain Reliance of the wicked upon the empty Hope of an Eternity of Happiness, after such an incomprehensible Term of infinite Misery!

If Men won't be terrified at this, no Eternity can terrify them, and they will proceed in the Paths of Sin till they sink into the Gulph of infinite Misery.

How proper then, since an Eternity of Misery cannot frighten Men from Sin, to allure them by the Love which our God has had for us, his Creatures, to intice him to do his Will while we are here in this State of Probation, and to shew him, that he has never forsaken us: That he has, from his bountiful Benevolence to us, given us a Being, in a Heaven of incomprehensible Happiness; how that falling into Disobedience and rendering ourselves unfit for that State of Bliss, he has not abandoned us, but formed this wonderful Scheme of material Worlds to receive us during our Disability of enjoying the Happiness to which we were originally formed; how he has all along, with paternal Care, watched over us through all our Chances and Changes, and at last, through his Mercy, raised us up into this State of Probation in which we now stand; how he so loved us, that he gave his only begotten Son to die for us, an ignominious Death upon the Cross, to open the Door of Salvation for our Return; and how he is with us here in these Beings, always instant and present in the Person of the Holy Ghost, commonly known by the Name Conscience, in our Minds warning us from Offence, alluring us to Virtue, and endeavouring to steer us into the Paths of Salvation in the general Judgment; and how, failing of that, he will not forsake us even in the second Death which is Hell, but be instant even there with his holy Spirit,

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to bring us to Repentance, and to fit us even in that suffering miserable Estate for a Return to him, and to the Happiness of Heaven again, in the second Resurrection.

A Love like this must surely engage the Hearts of the most ungrateful and perverse to a Return of Love; and must, more than the Terrors of an eternal Punishment, or at least more than the Difference between an eternal and a temporary Hell, incline them to a Desire to walk in his Ways, and to obey his Laws, the Laws of his Love to us, ordained and promulgated to us not through Caprice, or for his own Sake, but for ours; to lead us into that Purity of Life, that Spirit of Peace and brotherly Love, and Forbearance to each other, which is so absolutely necessary for us to practice here, in order to fit ourselves again for the blessed Society of Heaven, which we lost by departing from it. I shall therefore conclude in the Words of the adorable Jesus, *Love God above all Things, and your Neighbour as yourself. For this is the Law and the Prophets.*

And now, to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three Persons but one only God, be all Honour and Glory, Might, Majesty and Dominion, as it was in the Beginning, now is, and ever shall be, World without End. Amen.



